



BROKEN MASCULINITIES

SOLITUDE, ALIENATION, AND
FRUSTRATION IN TURKISH LITERATURE
AFTER 1970

Çimen Günay-Erkol

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AFTER 1970

Çimen Günay-Erkol



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to my mom and dad

History is what hurts

FREDRIC JAMESON

*The truth of art lies in its power
to break the monopoly of established
reality to define what is real*

HERBERT MARCUSE

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xvii
<i>Introduction</i>	1
CHAPTER 1 / <i>Quixotic and Hurt: Victimized Men as a Stable Ground</i>	35
Men Under Surveillance: Coming of Age in Çetin Altan's <i>Büyük Gözaltı</i>	38
Masculinity as a National Preoccupation: Torture and Emasculization in Erdal Öz's <i>Yaralısın</i>	53
Masculinity Under Escalating Military Bureaucracy: Quixotic Sacrifice in M. C. Anday's <i>İsa'nın Güncesi</i>	73
CHAPTER 2 / <i>On the Post-Dictatorial Stage: March 12 by Women Writers</i>	89
Marxist, Feminist, Exiled: Female Masculinity in Sevgi Soysal's <i>Şafak</i>	97
Greywolves as Traumatized Heroes: Fear from the Feminine in Emine Işınsu's <i>Sancı</i>	113
Friend or Foe: Revolutionary Men as Husbands and Valentines in Pınar Kür's <i>Yarın Yarın</i>	126
Emasculated by Modernity: Clash of Rural and Urban Masculinities in Sevinç Çokum's <i>Zor</i>	144
CHAPTER 3 / <i>Masculinity and Modernization: Does Love Emasculate?</i>	163
Institutionalized Masculinities: Military and Marriage in Adalet Ağaoğlu's <i>Bir Düğün Gecesi</i>	165
Urban Guerilla in Love: Masculine Affirmation in Tarık Buğra's <i>Gençliğim Eyvah</i>	186
<i>Conclusion</i>	203
<i>Chronology</i>	219
<i>Bibliography</i>	225
<i>Index</i>	239

Preface

This book is an attempt to understand gender from the perspective of masculinities with Turkey's military periods as the backdrop. I am especially interested in the coup of 1971, which traumatized the climactic 1968 spirit in Turkey. I focus on novels published during and after the military intervention of 12 March 1971, which punished 1968 radicalism grievously and put the brakes on the rise of socialism in Turkey. Such an attempt allows one to reflect on some of the broader cultural and literary questions pertinent to Turkey, as well as the obscure history of the military coups, which has not been widely explored. It is hard to find books in English that address Turkey's 1968 as most of them refer to movements from Latin America or China for comparison. Turkey's political mobilization in 1968 took a serious toll and was threatening for the state. This was a close parallel with Europe in terms of timing, as the events in Istanbul followed those in Paris within a matter of weeks. Four weeks after the Sorbonne occupation on 13 May 1968, students occupied Istanbul Technical University on 17 June 1968. Students, workers, and political activists united in demonstrations, and after the barricades came down, marched with improvised weapons against police brutality and made a noteworthy call for change. There is a political urgency to question Turkey's 1968 if the current authoritarian political climate in Turkey is to be confronted.

I intend this book to serve as a reminder for the deeper roots of authoritarianism, which keeps haunting Turkey especially after the suppression of the Gezi Park movement in the summer of 2013. Despite the demilitarization of the political sphere in the last ten years, it is hard to say that Turkey's political culture has been profoundly transformed. Disputes on demilitarization reached a dramatic climax in 2012 with the trial of army officers in civil court, who were accused of underpinning civilian governmental control in 2003, including former top commanders, such as İlker Başbuğ, Turkey's military chief of the period, and several other officers and journal-

ists, as part of the controversial Ergenekon plot. A retired general plus sixteen others were sentenced to life in prison on 5 August 2013. Several officers were also detained in 2012 for their roles in the 28 February 1997 coup, when the military forced out a coalition government. The 1980 military overthrow, which was the last and bloodiest of Turkey's coups, was under fire as well. In 2013, Kenan Evren, the seventh president of Turkey (1983–1989) and the leader of the traumatic 12 September 1980 coup, stood trial, together with the top commander of the Air Force, Tahsin Şahinkaya, when the two were the only surviving leaders of the coup.

As of 2014, İlker Başbuğ and commanders who had received life sentences within the scope of the Ergenekon trial were released from jail after 26 months, when top court ruled in March 7 that the court trying them had failed to publish a detailed verdict on the case and therefore violated their rights. Kenan Evren, who in a speech in 1984 asked, “should we feed them in prison for years instead of hanging them?” (*asmayalım da besleyelim mi?*) in defense of the executions of political activists after the army takeover, received life sentence in June 18 along with Tahsin Şahinkaya. Evren died on 9 May 2015 and Şahinkaya on 11 July 2015 while the sentence was on appeal. While some see the appeal to justice as a challenging move, there are also others who see the Ergenekon trials as theater built on fabricated evidence and exaggerations, and designed to suppress current political opposition rather than a cleansing of Turkey's deep state. They consider the life sentences of two old, long-retired generals hardly more than symbolic in a country where the governing bodies still function under the 1982 constitution imposed by the military after the coup and many of the anti-democratic aspects of the 1980s are still being felt.

It is necessary to develop a better understanding of the authoritarianism and brutality that made militaristic masculinity a critical paradigm, since Turkey keeps struggling with democratization in 2014 despite the transformation of the military control of politics. It is necessary to make people confront their “militarized/authoritarian” selves in their civilian lives. The quest to look back at the 1970s can help us identify the ways in which power shifted between some political actors, and systematically marginalized or silenced certain others. Turkey's 1968 is very important in this sense, as liber-

ation was demanded under a paternal sort of care by self-appointed leaders, where student activism, political parties, and unions organized the energy of the revolt in various hierarchies. Considering that central figures of the right-wing student movements of the 1970s are currently in high political positions in Turkey, one can hardly say that what happened forty-five years ago is now the distant past.

Contrary to the 1960 and 1980 coups, the military did not assume direct power in 1971, but urged for a government of technocrats from outside the parliament and exercised its influence behind the scenes. However, together with the police force, the military pursued a brutal campaign and made arbitrary arrests. The number of casualties in the ten-year period between 1970 and 1980, resulting from unidentified assassinations, street fights, and crimes by state agents (i.e., the police and military) is assumed to be greater than 5,000. Violence escalated as the ideological conflict between the left and the right got further complicated with increased religious fundamentalism and Kurdish separatism. Many of the painful memories of these specific periods of Turkish history are still waiting to be confronted.

This book focuses on the testimonial post-coup novels, which were named after the intervention as the “March 12 novels,” as they feature events from that period in their narrations. My aim is to organize the historical and literary discussion of these testimonies around important themes from masculinity studies, such as hegemony and performativity. These are issues that previous commentators of the March 12 novels deliberately stopped short of confronting. Masculinity is a new research area in Turkey, especially within literary criticism. In the last few years, as feminist scholars took greater steps to deal with gender in the broader sense of the term, masculinity became the explicit focus of research projects in diverse fields, such as sociology and history. The real dawn of such research lies in literature, as the artistic dimension allows a more nuanced discussion of attitudes and institutions of masculinity (such as the military) by writers of different generations and political orientations. Literary production of the military periods provides an excellent example of how fiction makes it possible to narrate otherwise intimidating stories of traumatic events.

Almost all of the critics and writers mentioned here were participants of the events of 1968 and were transformed by them. The

seizure of power by the military in 1980 pushed masses of people into violent struggles in a more militarized and oppressive manner than the March 12 intervention in 1971, and imposed a fierce social alienation and de-politicization on post-coup Turkish society. The 1971 coup inspired numerous works not only in the nine-year period between the two military interventions of 1971 and 1980, but also in the post-1980s. There are young writers who produced second-hand accounts of the March 12 events in the 1980s, and the artistic merit of their work cannot be denied. The criterion that has governed my choice of novels, however, is the attempt to avoid interference with the echoes of the last coup and the different social dynamics of the literary atmosphere of the neo-liberal post-1980s.

The controversies related to gender and sexuality in the March 12 fiction, which surface in a polarized discourse shaped by the fierce conflict between the left and the right in Turkey, have the whole history of Turkish modernization as the primary part of their enigma. Written in the thick of political battles, March 12 novels look at a profound crisis of power not only in the political domain but also in the personal domain, which requires a critical look at Turkey's modernization. Whether satiric or realistic, March 12 novels elaborate the ways masculinities and femininities settled in the traumatized power hierarchy of the period, questioning modernist utopias and authoritarian pressures. They portray how prescribed ideals became sources of anxiety for individuals. Gender is one of the principal hermeneutical manifolds to understand the dynamics of the period, not only because both of the political discourses (revolutionary-left and ultra-nationalist-right) were caught in the ruses of patriarchy, but also because the boasting of the military produced subjects that were traumatized in their gendered identities.

The main focus of this book is on novels published between 1971 and 1980, which contain firsthand eyewitness accounts. Selected works represent the diversity of March 12 fiction as extensively as possible. Works of writers who belong to the revolutionary left are included as well as those of the radical right. On the whole, I chose books that are particularly representative of the chaotic atmosphere of the March 12 coup. The analyses of the novels are arranged in chronological order to deal better with their specific position at the historical moment that marks the development of March 12 fiction.

Chapter 1 contains a critical reading of three popular March 12 novels published immediately after the military intervention: *Büyük Gözaltı* (Extreme Surveillance, 1972), *İsa'nın Güncesi* (The Diary of Jesus, 1974), and *Yaralısin* (You Are Wounded, 1974). Chapter 2 focuses on the works of female writers, who in their novels broadened the discussions about the period by critically dealing with male subject positions, and this includes *Şafak* (The Dawn, 1974), *Sancı* (Stitch, 1975), *Yarın Yarın* (Tomorrow Tomorrow, 1976) and *Zor* (Hard, 1977). Finally, Chapter 3 explores two novels published in 1979 at the outset of the third and the most devastating military intervention of 12 September 1980: *Gençliğim Eyvah* (Alas! My Youth, 1979) and *Bir Düğün Gecesi* (A Wedding Night, 1979).

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inspiration. I did not follow the path of engineering as they had expected, and this book is my apology.

I enjoyed the challenge of researching and writing this book very much. However, from time to time, I found myself haunted by the dark memories presented by the victims and witnesses of the military coup. There were times when things did not go well, and I wanted to quit writing altogether. I am greatly indebted to Ernst van Alphen who helped me stay tuned, contributed to my ability to grasp trauma in its reality and reproduction, and helped me to make my observations into literary analysis. Without him, I would have quit my studies altogether, and my manuscript would never have left my drawer.

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Introduction

A common expression in Turkish that communicates the power of a hardship, a struggle, a burden on an individual is “having the milk one had drunk from his mother pumped out through his nostrils” (anasından emdiği süt burnundan gelmek). The significance of this saying—besides the savage image of torture it implies with the image of a fluid being forced through the nostrils—is its metaphorical suggestion of the long-term storage of the mother’s breast milk in an individual’s adult body. By means of such an imagery, this expression points out the special link between the past and the present, despite the gap that separates the two. It hints that people carry their pasts in them, and also suggests that when under repression, one encounters elements of his past. History as “breast milk” as a metaphor fittingly describes how battles that evoked cultural and political conflicts in Turkey’s past still reverberate in Turkey’s present. Military coups, for example, are such specters.

Turkey experienced three successful (1960, 1971, and 1980) and two abortive military coups (1962 and 1963) in the twenty-year span from 1960 to 1980.¹ The 1960 coup was a direct intervention against the Menderes government, which lost the people’s support due to the mid-1950s economic crisis as well as its suppressive policies regarding the freedom of press and student demonstrations. Most intellectuals welcomed the intervention because a new constitution—with a wide range of civil liberties and social rights—was introduced following the military coup.

1 The history of military coups in Turkey provides a dramatic history of the development of capitalism in the country. İsmet Akça fruitfully discusses how all military coups helped the construction of an authoritarian state form, and how the 1980 military intervention especially gave rise to the establishment of neo-liberal capitalism in Turkey. İsmet Akça, “Hegemonic Projects in post-1980 Turkey and the Changing Forms of Authoritarianism,” in *Turkey Reframed: Constituting Neoliberal Hegemony*, ed. İsmet Akça, Ahmet Bekmen and Barış Alp Özden (London and New York: Pluto Press, 2014).

Liberal attitudes of the new constitution toward organized political activity caused several different political groups such as Islamists, Turkists and socialists to accumulate around political clubs. The 1971 intervention was different, since military did not assume direct power but urged for a technocratic government while exercising its power behind the scenes.² Although armed forces acted indirectly in politics, their response to protesters in the streets was direct. Turkey became a site of torment under the military regime from 1971 to 1973, overwhelmingly for the leftists.

The 1980 coup was a direct intervention to politics. It is considered as one of the CIA assisted overthrows worldwide.³ In addition to financial instability and social unrest, Kurdish separatism and Islamic extremism complicated the political scene of the 1980s. Several people were sentenced to the death penalty and were executed. The military outlawed all political parties and passed numerous laws drastically affecting the socio-economic and political structures. The number of casualties from the two military coups has been estimated around 5,000. Between 1975 and 1980, an estimated 5,000 people were killed with three times as many wounded.⁴ There is a dramatic increase in the number of victims within the two-year period of 1977–1979: from 230 in 1977 to between 1200 and 1500 in 1979.⁵ Another estimate has the number of victims as 231 in 1977 and 832 in 1978.⁶ In 1981, after the coup, authorities accused the anticommunist movement and its paramilitary cadres of 694 murders between

2 The majority on the left saw a revolutionary potential in the armed forces for a socialist regime and a left-wing junta (later known as the Madanoğlu Junta) deciphered on 9 March 1971, on the intended date of intervention by the military. Özgür Mutlu Ulus, *The Army and the Radical Left in Turkey: Military Coups, Socialist Revolution and Kemalism* (Leiden: I.B Tauris, 2011).

3 Daniele Ganser notes the U.S. support for the coup via counter-guerilla forces (Turkish gladio) as part of the counter-insurgency politics of the United States. Daniele Ganser, "Terrorism in Western Europe: An Approach to NATO's Secret Stay-Behind Armies," *Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, 2005 Winter/Spring: 69–95.

4 Ergun Özbudun. *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 35.

5 Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1993), 276.

6 Kenneth Mackenzie, *Turkey Under the Generals* (London: Institute for the Studies of Conflict, 1981), 8.

the years 1974–1980.⁷ Before the return to democracy in 1983, judges granted 500 of 6,000 requests for death sentences, forty-nine of which were executed.⁸

Military tutelage and political repression continued into the 1990s. Another intervention into politics in Turkey by the military came on 28 February 1997 with a memorandum that precipitated the resignation of the prime minister on the grounds of rising religious extremism in the country.⁹ The process was later labeled a “post-modern coup.” Another memorandum followed on 27 April 2007, labeled the “midnight memorandum” or “e-memo,” prepared by the chief of general staff and a group of other commanders, published on the webpage of the armed forces. Amid the political crisis over the election of the country’s president, there was a parliamentary deadlock on whether the presidential nominee’s spouse should wear an Islamic headscarf or not. The memorandum stated that the military was following the debate over secularism in the presidential election with “concern” and would “openly display its position and attitude when it becomes necessary.”

Military coups traumatized Turkey’s walk toward democracy. Each had massive impact on people’s engagement with politics and trust in the parliamentary system. Among the four interventions, the 1971 coup stands unique in its attack of the 1968 spirit in Turkey and its vocal anti-Americanism.¹⁰ The year 1968 in Turkey was an outcry for change but it lacked a program of consensus. Massive protests in 1968 attacked not only the ills of capitalism but also the administration’s inadequacy in answering requests for freedom in universities and elsewhere. Official history, government policies against Kurdish citizens, pressure on Alevi minorities, and authoritarian policies were

7 Albert J. Jongman and Alex Peter Schmid, *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories and Literature* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 674.

8 Kerem Öktem, *Angry Nation: Turkey Since 1989* (London: Zed Books, 2011), 59.

9 Ümit Cizre and Menderes Çınar, “Turkey 2002: Kemalism, Islamism, and Politics in the Light of the February 28 Process,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, 2/3, (2003): 309–32.

10 In his “68: İkinci Eleme” (68: The Second Elimination), Tanıl Bora explains how the premature anti-authoritarian intentions of the 1968 movement distinguishes it from the leftist movements of the 1970s. Tanıl Bora, “68: İkinci Eleme,” *Birikim* 109 (1998): 28–36.

questioned. Students were the catalyzing agents of the street struggles and demonstrations, which were answered with police brutality.¹¹ A sometimes-vulgar Marxism led most of the movements, eclipsing the attempt to break the hold of the oligarchy and establish a libertarian democracy. The student-worker alliance, backed up with strikes and massive protests, initiated a conservative counter-current, and a civil-war atmosphere existed, as paramilitary anticommunist groups organized themselves into the guardians of the state against the disorder that threatened it. Streets became the venue of violent clashes: armed leftist- and right-wing students clashed in the streets causing injuries and deaths. As the military intervened, thousands of people found themselves in courts controlled by the military and then imprisoned, facing mistreatment and torture, paying for their demands.

The 1971 coup is also unique in terms of the literary corpus it inspired. Intellectuals mostly supported the 1960 coup, and therefore it did not provoke much reactionary literature. The 1981 coup initiated reactionary and documentary writings, but the yield is diverse in form and content, and hence lacks the continuity of a literary current. There is, however, a rich body of literature that concentrates on the memories of the 1971 coup, which is named “March 12th literature.” Different genres such as the novel, poetry, and short story can be observed within this trend.¹² However, the most popular genre was novel. In the nine-year period between the two successive military interventions of 1971 and 1980, several novels followed one

11 There are significant similarities between what happened in Turkey and the events of May 1968 in Paris. Andrew Feenberg and Jim Freedman see the insurrection in France as part of a worldwide revolutionary movement and refer to similar experiences in Latin America, China, Indochina, Japan and Mexico, but they omit Turkey. Andrew Feenberg and Jim Freedman, *When Poetry Ruled the Streets: The French May Events of 1968* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

12 Famous poet Can Yücel was sentenced to fifteen years because of his translations from Che Guevara and Mao Zedong by the military court in 1971. He was released with the announcement of general amnesty in 1974 and published *Bir Siyasinin Şiirleri* (Poems of a political prisoner). Several such prison writings exist but are not widely explored by literary critics. Some short stories on March 12 were collected in a book published in 2008, *Yiğit İken Ölenlere: 12 Mart Öyküleri Antolojisi* [To Whom died brave: Anthology of stories on March 12] (Istanbul: Can Yayınları, 2008).

another in publication including books by Çetin Altan, Erdal Öz, Melih Cevdet Anday, Sevgi Soysal, Pınar Kür, Selim İleri, Oktay Rıfat, Taruk Dursun Kakinç, Demirtaş Ceyhun, Samim Kocagöz, Sevinç Çokum, Emine Işınsu, Füzûzan (Yerdelen), Demir Özlü, Adalet Ağaoğlu, and Tarık Buğra, whose positions ranged from ordinary observers of the political atmosphere to politicians and activists.

Famous director Yılmaz Güney was also among the March 12 writers. Güney wrote three novels, *Salpa* (Salpa), *Sanık* (Suspect), and *Hücrem* (My Cell), in 1971–1973, which were published in 1975. In these novels, we find an attempt to make history via literature, which provides the readers less with stylistic experimentations and more with an autobiographical and journalistic realism, and “stories that history has forgotten,” as Azade Seyhan subtly summarizes.¹³ Literature, Seyhan states, complements “our understanding of the past” and gives us a chance to review some personal and intimate details of important historical events.¹⁴ When talking about March 12 novels, “to complement” can be replaced with “to challenge” as the fictional reconstruction of the grand narratives of history offers new ways of thinking of the events, and invites readers to imagine what is unimaginable within the “scientific approach” of history writing.

In the post-1980s, memories of the 1971 and 1980 military coups inspired several renowned novelists of contemporary Turkish literature such as Oya Baydar, Latife Tekin, Adalet Ağaoğlu, Mehmet Eroğlu, Ahmet Altan and Bilge Karasu to start important debates. In the literature of the post-1980s, there were writers with limited public appeal who contributed to the surge of “September 12 literature” from prison.¹⁵ The 1980 coup was an important turning point in Turkish letters, which inspired book-length studies and eclipsed the critical study of the 1971 experience. The toll of September 12 was the heaviest: in total, fifty people were executed, 500,000 were

13 Azade Seyhan, “Introduction: Novel Moves,” in *Tales of Crossed Destinies: The Modern Turkish Novel in a Comparative Context* (New York: MLA, 2008), 1–22.

14 Ibid., 5.

15 Başak Deniz Özdoğan mentions writers such as A. Kadir Konuk and Hüseyin Şimşek as important figures of prison literature. “Experience of September 12 coup d’état in Turkish Novels of the 1980s.” Unpublished master’s thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2008.

arrested, and hundreds died in prison. In the late 1990s, Turkey witnessed a boom in the publishing of memoirs, testimonials, and fiction that focused on the 1980 coup. The 1971 intervention and the military rule of 1971 to 1973 made limited appearance in the post-1980s as defining themes in biographical or autobiographical form. Testimonials of 1971 emerged quite late, after a considerable amount of time had passed over the dreadful events of the 1980s. Testimonies and biographies of people who witnessed this period are still limited in number.¹⁶

In his *Testimony After Catastrophe*, which concentrates on the testimonies of atrocity, torture, the Holocaust, and ethnic cleansing in the Balkans during the 1990s, Stevan Weine indicates that fictionalized testimonials do an important job, since they carry out a more nuanced discussion of the traumatic events and their consequences on individuals.¹⁷ March 12 novels shed light on such personal moments not seen by “(official) history” and carry out a vivid discussion of a dark period, when there was little effort to shed light on it. In the 1970s, when there was not a rich body of testimonial-historical writings of the period, the fictional perspective provided by these novels, for better or worse, accommodated the only discussion of the escalating political violence and the March 12 regime that purport-

16 An early account of Turkey's 1968 is written by Harun Karadeniz, student leader from Istanbul Technical University, who published his memoirs *Olaylı Yıllar ve Gençlik* (Troubled Years and Youth) in 1974. Karadeniz died in 1975. The majority of memoirs came during and after the 1990s. Some examples are: *Ziverbey Köşkü* (Ziverbey Mansion, 1987) by İlhan Selçuk; *Bir MİT Mensubunun Anıları* (Memoirs of an Intelligence agent, 1991) by Mehmet Eymür; *12 Mart'tan 12 Eylül'e Mamak* (Mamak from March 12 to September 12, 1998) by Oral Çalışlar; *Bir Annenin 68 Anıları* (Memoirs of a mother from 1968, 2000) by Muazzez Aktolga; *Gülleyle'ya Anılar* (Memories to Gülleyle, 2002) by Azra Erhat; *İhtilal, İhtiras ve İdeal, 68 Kuşağı Hakkında* (Revolution, passion, and ideal: About the 68 generation, 2008) by Erol Kılınç; *Sokak Güzeldir: 68'de Ne Oldu?* (Streets are beautiful: What happened in 68?, 2009) by Nadire Mater. Ertuğrul Kürkçü, member of THKP-C (People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey) and the only survivor of the Kızıldere massacre, published his first book *İsyanın İzinde* (En Route of revolt, DipNot Yayınları), a history of revolts in Turkey starting from Anatolian heretics and covering the revolutionary movement of the 1970s in 2013.

17 Stevan Weine, *Testimony After Catastrophe: Narrating the Traumas of Political Violence* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2006).

edly put an end to the 1968 spirit and the rise of anti-Americanism. March 12 novels shouldered the heavy burden of witnessing history and of aesthetically assimilating the trauma of the military intervention, and focused on the disintegration of families, marriages, and friendships under the tensions of political ideologies, and the profound pain caused by political imprisonment, mishandling, and torture.

Similar to the imaginative discourses born out of the Holocaust, the literature of March 12 challenged the split between historical and fictional discourses with hybrid narrations, and invalidated the claims in an impartial history. In contrast to the survivors of the Holocaust, those who have written about March 12 found it safer for their testimonies to function as literary accounts instead of historical accounts, in order to escape further oppression by the state. The allegorical discourse in some of the novels was a ploy to deflect political persecution. To make readers historically familiar with the dark face of the military rule was apparently one of the primary aims of the writers, but they had to thinly disguise their agenda because of the oppressiveness of the state power. With regard to Holocaust literature, Ernst van Alphen argues that “historical concerns [were] more important than literary concerns” for writers of this grand trauma.¹⁸ The same holds true for the novelists of March 12. March 12 novels were texts written in an atmosphere of social, political and historical tensions that defy a dedicated aesthetic isolation. To understand the brutality of the state against its citizens, and of the rival ideologies against one another were the main concerns of this corpus. The need to speak of the events, to recall and encounter them once again, to analyze, criticize and satirize them was more important in the literary movement of March 12 than any aesthetic concern. Yet, some writers succeeded in turning their observations and experiences into masterful texts, which defy conventions of propagandist and complacent sentimentalist bad novels.

In the broad sense of the term “eyewitness,” all March 12 writers were eyewitnesses to the throes of the political chaos as they were residents of big cities where the streets were partitioned into camps in the 1970s. Some writers experienced much more than others,

18 Ernst van Alphen, *Caught by History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature and Theory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 27.

because they were politically engaged—those who became victims wrote narrations with testimonial overtones. They wrote about their bitter experiences as political detainees, focusing on the struggles of those who tried to overcome the trauma of their victimization by forces with official sanction. There were also others, passive observers of the political polarization, who, though never physically victimized, wrote about their challenging attempts to reach beneath the “official” realities of the period. In the accounts of the March 12 novels, there is a complex mixture of recovery of the recent past, revision of real events, and an attempt to speak out about what “really” happened.

Despite the fact that their stories caught a big audience, March 12 novels have hardly been accepted in curricula as sources of history or literary pride. They are often seen as artistically low-quality novels which tell opinionated histories that bring too much politics to the table. Most of the critics evaluate these literary works as politically driven forms of fiction, which lapse into sentimentality and produce clichés of understanding the events. Even if this were the case, which I do not agree for the entire corpus, and for reasons that will be documented later in detail, in view of Hayden White’s famous aphorism that “a bad narrative can tell us more about narrativity than a good one,” I think March 12 novels still have things to tell us, about several problems that are considered important in literary studies.¹⁹

The purpose of this book is to delve into the alternative history provided by March 12 novels, borrowing tools from masculinity studies.²⁰ In his seminal 1996 book, *Manhood in America*, Michael Kimmel examines how proving masculinity became a marker for men in U.S. history and became hegemonic in parallel with the rise of capitalism in the society.²¹ My attempt to study men in the literature of Turkey’s 1968 history has a similar intention to question hegemony in multiple

19 Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” in *Narrative Theory: Interdisciplinarity* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 70.

20 Judith Kegan Gardiner’s *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory* is an excellent collection that explains why research on men is in alliance with feminist theory. See Judith Kegan Gardiner, ed., *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

21 Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

contexts, paying attention to Turkey's growing capitalism. I won't be comparing masculinities of different generations like Kimmel but my questions likewise are beset by feminist intentions. I consider scholarship on masculinity the natural ally of feminist theory because I believe, taken as a whole, questioning masculinity is a feminist work.²²

To change hierarchies of gender necessitates the recognition of the complicity of gender roles, and a transformation of men's mind-sets and daily practices, an exclusiveness where feminism (excluding research on men) doesn't seem to penetrate much. Fred Pfeil notes in his *White Guys: Studies in Postmodern Difference and Domination* that several versions of feminist theory fail "to allow for the possibility of any more or other than a single, unitary mode of masculinity in a given society at a given time (or, in some of the more extreme variants, anywhere on the planet, anytime.)"²³ Men, on the other hand, fail to see their "masculinities" from a critical perspective in its naturalized form. In her *Stiffed: the Betrayal of Modern Man*, Susan Faludi rightly asks, "if men are mythologized as the ones who *make things happen*, then how can they begin to analyze what is *happening to them*?"²⁴

Following Faludi, I want to ask what happened to men in Turkey's 1968 history, and how their masculinities in crisis are reflected in literature. March 12 novels treat history and identities as constructs, and attempt to deconstruct mainstream history via testimonials of personal traumas. While doing this, they negotiate masculinity as a performance and explore it in connection with concepts such as state, nation, war, the military, and so on. At the heart of the book is the interrogation of the gendered response in fiction to the military's taking of power, through a comparison of novels written by men and women from different sides of the Cold War realpolitik. The major axis is an exploration of masculinities, since March 12 novels abound

22 In Turkey, there is still an ongoing debate whether the critical study of men and masculinities is in conflict with feminism, as several feminists believe that studying men hijacks feminism. For a good summary on such discussions see Joyce E. Canaan and Christine Griffin, "The New Men's Studies: Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution?" *Men, Masculinities and Social Theory*, eds. Jeff Hearn and David Morgan (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 206–14.

23 Fred Pfeil, *White Guys: Studies in Postmodern Difference and Domination* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 222.

24 Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of Modern Man* (London: Vintage, 2000), 13. Emphasis in the original.

in scenes negotiating the public enactments of masculinity, trying to locate the “essence” of it. The essence, if there is one, is a constant state of “swinging from penis to phallus” as John MacInnes pointedly argues in *The End of Masculinity*.²⁵

It is not a surprise that masculinity became a critical issue in fiction during such a period of upheaval, which required “masculine” brava-do in combat and against the crimes of the state. Men formed the frontlines of student protests, strikes, and street clashes in that period, creating a homosocial brotherhood in arms. Women, on the other hand, were rarely decision makers on the leftist or the anticommunist side. Masculinity was the primary constituent both in Turkish Marxism and anticommunism, which parachuted several complexes onto each side. Both camps celebrated traditional masculine concerns and phallic potency, creating similar ideals of masculine toughness. The chapters in this book will touch upon various theoretical concepts needed to explain the aspects of masculinity presented in the March 12 novels, but my approach will be based on the post-structuralist thought, negotiating ideas such as “essence” and “nature.”

This book does not uphold a singular concept of masculinity.²⁶ Rather, I will explore how writers negotiated between the essentialist and non-essentialist, singular and plural experiences of masculinity. I look at defining experiences for men such as war, combat, and victimization to assess the impact of their traumatic experiences, and in return, to understand masculinities. Similar to the singular concept of masculinity, the categorization of masculinities is likewise problematic, but research based on such classifications will also be referenced in this book at times, providing a convenient point of entry to analyze the unstable in-betweenness of men.²⁷

25 John MacInnes, *The End of Masculinity: The Confusion of Sexual Genesis and Sexual Difference in Modern Society* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998), 78.

26 Judith Butler warns in *Gender Trouble*, “The effort to identify the enemy as singular in form is a reverse-discourse that uncritically mimics the strategy of the oppressor instead of offering a different set of terms.” See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), 13.

27 R. W. Connell presents four “patterns of masculinity in the current Western gender order”: hegemony, subordination, complicity, and marginalization in his monumental book, *Masculinities*. R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 77–81.

Several studies attempt to link gender to traumatic encounters; much work has been carried out considering the gender of war, which is generally labeled as masculine. Lynne Segal, for example, references war as a male domain but she also notes that it allows “women’s passport into the experiences and world of men.”²⁸ Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar assert in their influential book, *No Man's Land*, that World War I was a form of sex warfare, which produced discourses of gender and citizenship while contesting them at the same moment.²⁹ In a similar vein, Elaine Showalter underlines the Great War as “a crisis of masculinity and a trial of the Victorian masculine ideal.”³⁰ Joanna Bourke, in *Dismembering the Male* deals with war as a setting of formation and also deformation of masculinities.³¹

The scholarship in these oft-cited works focuses on war and exposes how intricately the process of gender is tied to the process of nation building, and also to the construction of hegemony.

March 12 novels are not war novels per se; however, the atmosphere surrounding the outbreak of the military intervention was dramatically close to a civil-war atmosphere. Famous German–Turkish writer Zafer Şenocak notes the streets “piled with sandbags” and the police “wearing armor” in “Turkey: The Lost Generation,” *Global Revolt*.³² Some of the student radicals who worked to create a political awareness among their fellows and to stop the universities’ functioning with boycotts gradually assumed the role of urban guerilla, and traded their improvised weapons for real ones. This shift transformed the resistance against the police and the state. Both the leftist revolutionaries and the anticommunists found themselves trapped in the dichotomy of to die or kill for their cause, which not

28 Lynne Segal, *Is the Future Female? Troubled Thoughts on Contemporary Feminism* (London: Virago Press, 1987), 171.

29 Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 21–34.

30 Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830–1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 171.

31 Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

32 Zafer Şenocak, “Turkey: The Lost Generation,” in *1968–Memories and Legacies of a Global Revolt*, eds. Philipp Gassert and Martin Klimke (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute), 175–80.

only increased the toll of casualties but also dramatically changed the meaning of masculinity. The urban guerilla experience became the defining moment of the history of the 1968 movement in Turkey.

RECORDING HISTORY OR WRITING ABOUT HISTORY?

Peter Brooks, in *Reading for the Plot*, indicates that his “dissatisfaction with the various formalisms that have dominated critical thinking about narrative” put him in engagement with the role of desire in narrative.³³ A similar dissatisfaction with the formalisms imposed on the approaches to March 12 novels has encouraged me to revisit those texts with a different agenda. Similar to many other novels that deal with historical incidents, March 12 fiction has mostly been evaluated with a filter of relevancy and an index of verisimilitude in Turkey, which fixed the critical focus at the fidelity of the narrations to the facts.³⁴ Almost all of the critics have persisted in reading these novels as relatively straightforward texts instead of analyzing their more complex strategies. They did not engage with the novels’ much broader exploration of the social and psychological conditions but focused, almost exclusively, on the correct representation of political and ideological issues. In its approach to March 12 novels, mainstream literary criticism (some examples will be examined in the following chapters) treated the corpus as a catalogue of the throes of the period, and analyzed March 12 novels from a classical Marxist (Lukácsian) perspective, prioritizing their political obligations.³⁵ Critics saw March 12 novels solely as reflectors of the dramatic events

33 Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York: Knopf, 1984), 47.

34 The jettisoning of certain books from the literary canon of March 12 should also be carefully explored. Critics of the March 12 novels mostly prioritized realistic novels with leftist tendencies and gave little credit to right-wing, surrealist, and satirical works.

35 Several critics of the 1970s followed the line drawn by French Marxists, and were influenced by Georgi V. Plekhanov and György Lukács. An analysis by Yıldız Ecevit on famous literary critic Fethi Naci describes the atmosphere of the 1970s literary criticism in detail. See Yıldız Ecevit, “Fethi Naci’de Toplumcu Estetiğin Üç Aşaması,” in *Fethi Naci’ye Armağan*, haz. Semih Gümüş (İstanbul: Oğlak Yayıncılık, 1997), 101–22.

of the military intervention, seeing history as context and literature as the mirroring text, and conforming to that “literature simply reflects history, or it is embedded in the social real, or else it is taken to be product of one or another historical moment.”³⁶

Previous criticism on post-coup writing in Turkey has built a problematic canon of March 12 novels. Critics have presented a singular image, which is quite misleading. Taken as a whole, it can be said that March 12 novels published during 1971–1980 consist of a realistic and politically charged discourse of the revolutionary left.³⁷ However, there are novels that would fit uneasily within this categorization. Although they have a common pool of motifs, March 12 novels sketch a complex picture, which defies the idea of a singular canon. It is not possible to ignore the difficulties in collapsing all March 12 novels into a general scheme without depriving them of their important peculiarities. In the broader picture, there are satirical novels that do not initiate salient links to historical realities of the period, and realistic novels that deny leftist formulations of victimization. These stand in turn next to the realistic novels implicitly or explicitly engaged with revolutionary leftist politics.

As Julian Markels succinctly puts it, “realist novel has been the genre most accommodating to the imagination of class.”³⁸ That qualifies as the principal reason for the critics of Turkish fiction prioritizing realistic works of the leftist writers as the cornerstones of the March 12 novels in the class-conscious political atmosphere of the 1970s. The ignorance of right-wing novels can be explained as a result of the hatred felt for the fascist ideology and the heightened political accent and bigotry in some of these novels, which is believed to bring a lack of literary understanding. The politically charged discourse of the leftist novels also attracted criticism, but they were accepted as suitable material for critical study, despite the fact that

36 Jürgen Pieters, *Moments of Negotiation: The New Historicism of Stephen Greenblatt* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2001), 12.

37 Rıfat N. Bali notes that the majority of the Istanbul-based writers were either members or supporters of the Labor Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi, TİP) and that some repeated the party line in their newspaper columns. Rıfat N. Bali, *Turkish Students' Movements and the Turkish Left in the 1950s and 1960s* (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 2006), 71.

38 Julian Markels, *A Marxian Imagination* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002), 22.

some of them contained the same propagandist devices used by the right-wing writers.

The mainstream (and unsurprisingly male-stream) critics of the March 12 novels, such as Berna Moran, Murat Belge, Fethi Naci, Ahmet Oktay, and Ömer Türkeş seem to overlook that March 12 novels stand for a dynamic refraction rather than a static reflection of history. According to Moran, one of the first academic critics of these books, March 12 novels record the tyrannies and struggles encountered by left-wing intellectuals and activists during the military rule.³⁹ By his account, these narratives hark back to pastoral narratives of Turkish literature, often referred to as “the Anatolian novel, which focus on the realities of village people with a gratification of the nature.”⁴⁰ Moran suggests that *eşkıya*, the noble savage, who fights for justice against the landlords and helps peasants in the Anatolian novel, reappears in a modernized form as a social reformer, the revolutionary leftist hero, who fights against the corrupt political and economic systems and injustices of the state. Moran evaluates the novels as historically rather than aesthetically valuable, arguing that the realistic and testimonial accounts of the novels helped them to gain popularity in their time. This popularity inevitably diminished, he adds, because of the ignorance of artistic measures by the writers. Moran, however, places Adalet Ağaoğlu’s *Bir Düşün Gecesi* in the margins of the March 12 canon as an outstanding novel, and argues that this novel stands for a transition to the impolitic and postmodern novel of the post-1980s.⁴¹

Moran is correct about the common interest of predominantly urban March 12 novels and the Anatolian novels in “the oppressed.” The notion of class was germane to the writers of both literary movements as an organizing principle. He, however, ignores that the subject matter of March 12 novelists is more squarely an elite suffering, in the sense that they were primarily engaged with the sufferings of

39 Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış III* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994), 11.

40 Another title for “the Anatolian novel” is “köy romanı” (village novel). The novel that is considered the apogee of this genre is Yaşar Kemal’s world-famous *İnce Memed* (Memed, My Hawk, 1955), which is an epic saga of the heroic fight of a noble bandit against rural landowners.

41 Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış III* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994), 34.

urban, upper-middle class, and bourgeois intellectuals during the coup. He links village novelists to March 12 novelists because of the socialist orientation or tendencies of the writers of both camps, rather than a convincing textual overlap in their literature.⁴²

Literary critic Murat Belge likewise puts the coup forward as the main axis of the narrations. He uses “March 12 novel” as an umbrella term for realistic accounts of the revolutionaries who became political prisoners of the military state. Belge suggests that the main problem of March 12 novels is “an anxiety of ideological legitimacy.”⁴³ He asserts that writers evaluating the situation as “insiders” (in prison) adopted more critical perspectives about the reasons and consequences of the military intervention, whereas others who wrote freely as “outsiders” attempted to provide an idealized picture of revolutionaries to compensate for the fact that they were not in prison.⁴⁴ He repeated his distaste for the stardom of revolutionaries in some of the March 12 novels in a recent interview published in 2007. In the interview, he explains his bitter criticism as a result of the unrealistic look of some writers at the incidents, and says that the experiences of the revolutionaries are not “honestly” shared in March 12 novels.⁴⁵ While under torture several men broke, adds Belge, in novels they are depicted as strong men and idealized for their courage.

Belge’s suggestion of “honesty” as a tool for literary criticism retains the problem of legitimacy. Whose traumatic memories are more realistic and therefore trustworthy? Belge, who was also subject to cruelties of the military regime, demonstrates an authority as “an insider” and criticizes the intensified heroism in some of the March 12 novels on the grounds of realism. However, this is not a valid point for literary criticism. March 12 novels refer to autobiographical instances, but this is not enough to allow them to serve as vantage points before other eyewitness forms. Studies show that memory is a complex database, and when witnesses of an event are later exposed

42 Aslı Daldal mentions the organic connection between some major figures of both literary movements in the context of the Kemalist-leftist journal *Yön*. Aslı Daldal, “The New Middle Class as a Progressive Urban Coalition: The 1960 Coup d’Etat in Turkey” *Turkish Studies* 5, no. 3 (2004): 87–88.

43 Murat Belge, *Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1998), 115.

44 Ibid., 118.

45 Tuba Çandar, *Murat Belge: Bir Hayat* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2007), 184.

to new information about it, their recollections often become distorted.⁴⁶ As the well-known example of fabricated memories cited by Dori Laub indicates, sometimes new information is not necessary for distortion at all; in his contribution to the seminal book *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, edited by Cathy Caruth, Laub refers to a testimony given by a survivor of the extermination camps, who reported seeing four chimneys blown up during a failed uprising in Auschwitz. It is known, in reality, that only one chimney exploded. Laub defends this testimony on the grounds that the testimony of the survivor was not historically but psychologically accurate, and adds that the victim had a deep need to believe in the possibility of resistance to extermination during her time in the camp.⁴⁷ Remembering is a complicated process, and both fact and fiction are essential to understanding “the reality” of the conditions surrounding the victim. Contrary to Belge, I am concerned with links established between the history and fiction of March 12, and thus I want to delve into the unsettling impact of false memories following the path opened by Laub.⁴⁸ Factually incorrect memories, I believe, should also have a say.

Similar to Belge, several other critics of Turkish literature seem to limit their remarks on March 12 novels primarily to a frame of real-

46 Robert F. Belli, Elizabeth F. Loftus, “The Pliability of Autobiographical Memory: Misinformation and the False Memory Problem,” in *Remembering Our Past: Studies in Autobiographical Memory*, ed. David C. Rubin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 157–79.

47 Dori Laub, “Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle,” in *Trauma Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 61–75.

48 Belge’s approach has an important nuance that should not be missed. He refers to “honesty” and “realism” and criticizes the heroism of revolutionaries in literature. In the upheavals of the 1970s, protagonists of March 12 novels were role models for a considerable number of people, who experienced the military rule in a similar vein with them, as victims. Fiction was hence producer of history as much as product of it, as people modeled themselves on information from literature. I think Belge’s criticism of heroism was to emphasize the tendency of March 12 novels to produce a contemporary kind of “Werther effect,” influencing the young activists of the 1970s, and forcing them into acts of derring-do, in a war already lost. We should take into account that the bitter criticism of Belge is fueled by the pride some novels find in heroism.

ism, questioning how truthful the narrations were to the facts of the period. Fethi Naci points at the “difficulty of writing about contemporaneous issues” in literature, and indicates that most of the writers of March 12 novels put their political views in the narrations directly, instead of engaging the reader in a debate.⁴⁹ He is the critic behind the statement that until the 1979 novel of Adalet Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düğün Gecesi*, “March 12 was often the literature of torture and heroism.”⁵⁰ It is interesting to observe that, despite the praise, Adalet Ağaoğlu does not accept her novel as a piece that should be categorized under the March 12 novel rubric. In her 2005 speech at Columbia University, she said, “I have never accepted March 12 to be a novel genre [...] Just because they were published after March 12, some literary critics have had the tendency of situating my novels in this category. This is wrong.”⁵¹ Ağaoğlu’s attempt to save her novel from being tainted by the label “the March 12 novel” hints at the extremity of the negative features attached to the corpus by critics.

Although I understand that Fethi Naci’s attack was at the uncritical reproduction of sensationalism and the exaggeration of the pains of the victim position, I consider his remark as an unfortunate one, because of its tendency to convene all March 12 novels around an ambivalent story of torture and heroism. As Susan Van Zanten Gallagher plausibly argues in “Torture and the Novel: J. M. Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians*,” it is important for writers dealing with torture in their works to achieve a balance by avoiding the reproduction of the representations of obscenities while, at the same time, taking them seriously.⁵² March 12 novelists watch that balance very carefully. Naci’s criticism, in my opinion, underestimates the critical look of the March 12 writers at torture, while fiercely exaggerating the sensational reproduction of obscenities in a limited number of novels. No matter how much of a compliment it carries for *Bir Düğün Gecesi*, Naci’s remark is a spuriously unifying one for the rest of March 12 novels.

49 Fethi Naci, *60 Türk Romanı* (Istanbul: Oğlak Yayınları, 1988), 365.

50 Ibid., 342.

51 Adalet Ağaoğlu, “On the Changes of 1970-80 in the Turkish Novel” (4 May 2005). This speech is also available online at http://www.lightmillennium.org/2005_15th/aagaoglu_speech.htm.

52 Susan van Zanten Gallagher, “Torture and the Novel: J. M. Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians*,” *Contemporary Literature* 29, no. 2 (1998): 277.

Another critic, Ahmet Oktay, makes similar remarks in his articles. In his view, most March 12 novels suffer from a lack of artistic personification of ideologies.⁵³ Oktay underlines the excessive political burden of the narratives.⁵⁴ Despite the disparaging tone he employs for the corpus, Oktay is one of the critics who noticed the new depictions of sexuality in March 12 novels. In a 1981 article titled “Cinsellik, Erotizm ve Ötesi (Sexuality, Eroticism and Beyond),” where he delineates the sexual dimension of several controversial works of Turkish literature, Oktay mentions three novels that are also central in this study, Sevgi Soysal’s *Şafak*, Pınar Kür’s *Yarın Yarın*, and Çetin Altan’s *Büyük Gözaltı*, as distinguished works that opened new horizons in the depiction of sexuality in fiction.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Oktay chooses not to develop this observation into an alternative reading of these novels. In a similar vein, literary critic Konur Ertop refers to the same three novels in his *Türk Edebiyatında Seks* (Sex in Turkish Literature), but he evaluates them in a negative light, arguing that narratives of sexuality in those novels are, in fact, tools used out of economic interests to attract popular attention to the works.⁵⁶

The heterogeneity of March 12 novels became more visible when studies focusing on representations of the 1968 generation in literature deconstructed the previously installed canon. Literary historian and critic Ömer Türkeş revealed the diversity of the March 12 novels and showed that previous criticisms had limited focus because of their selective approach against the available material.⁵⁷ Although he frames March 12 narratives primarily with a “requiem” for the revolutionaries victimized by the military state, Türkeş indicates that they articulate different worldviews, and should not be limited to the coup period, since they inspired contemporary novelists of the post-1980s as well.

53 Ahmet Oktay, “Gençliğim Eyvah: Komünizmin Hayaleti,” in *Türkiye’de Popüler Kültür* (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2002), 242.

54 Ahmet Oktay, “Yarın Yarın: Konuk Gelen Devrimci,” in *Türkiye’de Popüler Kültür* (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2002), 261.

55 Ahmet Oktay, “Cinsellik, Erotizm ve Ötesi” *Yazko Edebiyat* 4 (1981): 84, 86, and 87.

56 Konur Ertop, *Türk Edebiyatında Seks* (İstanbul: Seçme Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1977).

57 Ömer Türkeş, “Romanda 12 Mart Suretleri ve ‘68 Kuşağı,” *Birikim* 132 (2000): 80–85.

This challenging extension to the canon of the March 12 novels is important for two reasons. First, it reminds us that the effects of trauma can be multigenerational, because a cultural trauma, “an experience of acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity’s sense of its own identity,” may get transformed to younger generations, changing their group identities in several ways.⁵⁸ Second, it questions the currency of canons. To be able to analyze the influences of the March 12 military intervention, Türkeş suggests that the canon of March 12 novels should be opened up. Yet, his remarks also indicate a hesitation for alternative readings, especially for those planning to abandon the political and the economical theories for the cultural, and attempt to dwell more squarely on the individual minor stories beneath the political major ones. Türkeş insists that such a look will sanitize the political messages of the novels, since it will make leftist camaraderie and the sufferings of revolutionaries less visible as the leading literary themes of the March 12 novels.

Even the March 12 novels that remain within the range of leftist realism have a number of different guises. Not all of them stick to a single political truth in a propagandistic manner. Politics in these novels is not about a choice of taking sides in the contemporary political scene or parroting party politics, but it is rather a state of having certain norms, beliefs, and ways of life instead of some others. To declare March 12 fiction as comprised of politically engaged novels full of clichés, heroic figures, and brutal villains is to reduce these complex works to their non-significant common denominators. The insistence to turn to struggles anchored in the “properly” economic realm not only denies the heterogeneity of the corpus, but also limits the ways that can be followed to approach it.

To deal with the memories of the coup was, first and foremost, an attempt to come to terms with the military intervention. In addition to facing the traumatic experiences of March 12, there is also the desperate need to challenge the domineering historical narrative propagated by the political winners of the day, in the primary examples of the corpus. However, it is not possible to downgrade March 12 novels to historical records or mirrors of the events of the military period. From the political encounter with the agents of power in the

58 Jeffrey Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2004), 10.

settings of a coup d'état, the discussion in the novels about dominance and hegemony broadens its limits to the social, the sexual, and the psychological. March 12 novels, in my view, blend history and literature with multiple interacting contexts. They are complex texts, which in Dominick LaCapra's words, "has a set of interacting contexts whose relations to one another are variable and problematic."⁵⁹ Considering that the first novel associated with the March 12 canon was published a year before the military intervention took place, it may be a better idea to locate these novels in broader encounters with power, not only with the military but also with the society.

MEMORIES, FALSE MEMORIES, MEN: THE MARCH 12 NOVEL

March 12 novels are not urban versions of pastoral village novels that aim to destroy the status quo by positive heroes. They are not flags of ideologies waved at the skies to gather attention. They are not socialist realist novels attempting to institute the education of working-class people in the spirit of socialism. They are novels featuring stories of ordinary people and ordinary lives, stories that shed light on the disillusionment of the citizens of Turkey, during a period of rapid change that pushed the country toward an earnest self-interrogation. In my view, March 12 novels textually overlap with the existentialist works of the so-called "generation of the 1950s," because they likewise focus on individuals' struggles in collectives. The generation of the 1950s is comprised of well-recognized writers of contemporary Turkish fiction, such as Vüs'at O. Bener, Demir Özlü, Ferit Edgü, Orhan Duru, Yusuf Atılgan, Bilge Karasu and Tahsin Yücel, who contributed to a new surge in Turkish fiction with stories of isolated individuals who attempted to overcome their solitude with fantasies. Writers of this movement have dealt with the skepticism of urban persona and the growth of mistrust in people. This movement is definitely an ancestor of the March 12 novels, as both abound in characters that question their values in a crisis.

To evaluate March 12 novels as catalogues of history or ciphers

59 Dominick LaCapra, "Rethinking Intellectual History and Reading Texts," *History and Theory* 19 (1980): 254.

for politics, rather than a collection of imaginative stories about the sufferings and anxieties of individuals in 1970s Turkey, means ignoring several facts in favor of hyperbole. It is true that many examples are built on the still-fresh memories of the events of the military intervention, and, therefore, they are rich in quotidian details of the coup, and brisk in their journalistic style. It is also true that these novels attempt to reach people and seek to motivate them to mobilize notions of resistance to the imposed “facts.” However, these novels are also built on haunting stories of individuality, fear, and seeking connection, and they give voice not only to peoples’ struggles about their political identity but also to their anxieties of conforming to the norms of the culture and traditions, which limits several other dimensions of their personal identities. The anxiety of not conforming to the norms is a major problem in the March 12 novel. Therefore, “novel of manners” is another valid cluster for them. Since the accepted standards for manners and morals differ markedly between men and women, these novels extensively occupy themselves with gender, while dealing with the resistances between social collective action and individual freedom.

Obviously, military coup is a dramatic axis in the narrations. However, it is important to see that military intervention is not a prerequisite for political boasting or low treatment by officers, managers, or men with sanction in Turkey. Masculinity turns into a powerful metaphor in the literature of the coup period mostly because of the political pressures and horrors of the military period; however, March 12 novelists do not limit themselves to the coup in their analyses of men and power. Previous criticism say little about masculinity, but it seems that the critics show an awareness that March 12 novels have been dealing with the “toughness” of political action. They circle around the issue of masculinity without directly addressing it. In this sense, it is possible to say that the critical discussion of masculinity in the novels was seen before but ignored, or worse, denied. I will be considering what previous critics of the March 12 novels insistently turned a deaf ear to: the entanglement between power and masculinity. I will address several questions derived from this entanglement: How does masculinity function in the March 12 novel? How do men and women become masculine? How do the novels link gender to the monopoly on power in the throes of March 12? What kind of moralizing is present behind the narrativizing? The

oscillation between masculinity as an essence and as a matter of becoming will be my main focus.⁶⁰

Considering the horrific memories of the military intervention, gender and sexuality might be seen as inappropriate subjects for the scholarly study of the March 12 novels. There is the risk to mistake the quest to introduce gender and sexuality into the study of these novels with the attempt to whitewash the crimes of the state. Such a view would be an inaccurate view of this book, as I seek the possibility of exploring masculinity as a cause of political struggles staged in the narrations. Some scholars who are critical of gender studies argue that desire and sexuality-laden perspectives of contemporary research often tend to neglect material conditions.⁶¹ Terry Eagleton raises a similar concern about the eclipse of more important questions by “sexy” questions of pop-culture in his “The Politics of Amnesia,” by humorously saying that students of humanities are now “at work on sensationalist subjects like vampirism and eye-gouging, cyborgs and porno movies.”⁶² I agree that there is a change in the questions that contemporary humanities research considers important and it is impossible not to see that the replacement of the “transformative” old questions with the “entertaining” new ones is a political matter as much as a cultural problem of intellectual bankruptcy. But, instead of giving up on the “sexy” questions, it may be a better idea to pull them into “the greater problem.” Hence, my gendered reading is not a denial of the crimes of the military period, but an attempt to vitalize the search to understand and empathize.

Although the previous body of criticism acknowledged it as a genre associated with the military intervention, the first example of March 12 novels was published a year before the military took power

60 Discussion of masculinity as becoming is indebted to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari who articulate the notion with a rich history that dates back to classical Greek philosophy in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987) and *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking, 1977). Also see Felix Guattari, “Becoming-Woman,” *Semiotext(e)* 4, no. 1 (1981): 86–88.

61 Rosemary Hennessey, “Queer Visibility in Commodity Culture,” *Cultural Critique* 29 (1994); Donald Morton, *The Material Queer: A LesBiGay Cultural Studies Reader* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996).

62 Terry Eagleton, *After Theory* (London: Basic Books, 2003), 3.

into its own hands. This first novel was Melih Cevdet Anday's *Gizli Emir* (Secret Command, 1970), which was an unsettling tale featuring the psychological terror of the overpowering institutions on individuals. *Gizli Emir* illustrates a group of artists waiting to hear that some enigmatic command has finally been ordered by secret powers, in an anonymous time and setting. It satirizes military rule by showing the struggles of people in a city under the rule of an institution called AYOT (Asayışı Yerleştirme Olağanüstü Teşkilatı [The Extraordinary Institution for Securing Public Order]). The institution decides what time people should get up or go to bed, and for their well-being, it controls the entire city with irrational measures. Critics acknowledge this novel as the pioneering example of March 12, since it successfully delves into the atmosphere of fear and paranoia under the surveillance of repressive powers, an atmosphere that became an everyday reality during the military rule.

The first examples of the literary crusade of March 12 were novels written by the eyewitnesses, who experienced trauma as the state, which is supposed to serve people, became a means to accumulate power in the hands of the powerful. A tone of disappointment and self-questioning was dominant in those initial examples. Despite their common hot temper, these initial works were diverse in terms of their aesthetic strategies. Some were characterized by historical testimonial voices with a realist perspective, whereas others were satirical works, which revealed the violent struggle for power without any explicit reference to historical events and figures. Existentialism, as a philosophical practice, was explicit in the prominent examples of those pioneering novels in the sense of alienation and pessimism. Although pioneering writers of the March 12 novels were middle-aged intellectuals, they adopted (and also questioned) the symbolism of "Oedipal defeat" used for the breakdown of the resistance mostly by the young students who were in the frontlines.

In 1972, Çetin Altan, a recognized journalist and an ex-member of the parliament, published *Büyük Gözaltı* (Extreme Surveillance), a novel that commemorates his experiences of imprisonment right after the military took control. Because of Altan's reputation as an ex-MP and an oppositional critic of the government and its policies, the book gained wide-scale attraction. *Büyük Gözaltı* is a political satire centered on an anonymous individual's abstract story of custody. Altan combines the insecurity that comes with being impris-

oned on some unknown ground with the murky atmosphere of an oppressive police state. The story unfolds amid an unidentified time and setting, but as the protagonist of the novel recollects his childhood in Istanbul, it becomes clear that the story is an allusion to the tyrannies, which Altan personally encountered because of his political orientation.

Similar novels that lean on the first-hand experiences of writers followed *Büyük Gözaltı*. Recognized short-story writer Erdal Öz serialized his first novel *Yaralısin* (You Are Wounded), which makes use of some disturbingly painful memories of custody and prison, in the daily *Cumhuriyet* during 1973. He published it as book in 1974. Detailing the brutality inflicted upon political prisoners, Öz's *Yaralısin* narrates a piercing story of torture, which sketches how brute officers and their associates scarred people's lives during the heydays of military rule. This grotesque story is said to borrow from the prison diaries of student leaders Deniz Gezmiş and his friends Yusuf Aslan and Hüseyin İnan, who were leading figures of the 1968 movement in Turkey. Öz interviewed them in prison and blended their experiences with fiction producing *Yaralısin* and two additional memoir-styled novels *Gülünün Solduğu Akşam* (The Night His Rose Wilted, 1987) and *Defterimde Kuş Sesleri* (Cries of Birds in My Notebook, 2003). *Yaralısin* became a cult book in the 1970s, emblematic for the generation engaged in changing the world.

These macabre works initiated the process of publicly narrativizing the experiences of the violence of the political clashes, the oppressive atmosphere created by the memorandum, and the fierce political boasting of the armed forces. Writers described oppressed characters in anonymous times and settings, who fought an abstract form of oppression. How to respond to oppression was a challenging question for the pioneering novelists of March 12. Writers questioned the manners of correct political action, a genuine ideological dedication, and respectable individual agency. While dealing with symbols of political devotion, they also questioned the "death for a cause" propaganda. In 1974, prominent writer Tarık Dursun K. (Kakinç) published *Gün Döndü* (The Day Turned) and dramatized the struggles of a leftist revolutionary student turned in to the security forces by his father. *Gün Döndü* punctuated the war of self-sacrifice between young activists, and called attention to the sacrifices of a father who attempts to keep his son alive in a period of false

heroism. Acclaimed short-story writer Fûruzan [Selçuk] contributed to this surge with a novel that touched upon the repressive atmosphere of the period, and provided a look at the struggles of the young leftist activists in a chilling narrative that explores torture and its emotional burden. She published *47'liler* (The Generation of 1947) in 1974, a novel that exclusively depicts youngsters in their early twenties becoming involved with the leftist revolutionary movement. That same year, another stunning book came from the recognized poet Melih Cevdet Anday. Anday published *İsa'nın Güncesi* (The Diary of Jesus), a dark story of the military-flavored bureaucracy, which contested the ways that the aggressive state apparatus of March 12 erased people's self-conceptualization.

Throughout the second half of the 1970s, two significant changes took place. First, the right-wing writers started publishing novels that depicted their side of the story and offered an alternative genealogy of the military coup. These works attempted to challenge the leftist connotations of the victim/witness role providing the accounts of how the anticommunist youth, the "greywolves," experienced the military period. Their stories were a challenge to the revolutionary leftists' claim to the victim and witness position, and their accounts provided a very important impetus for keeping the validity of the military intervention alive, especially when the popularity of the image of the armed forces as the savior of the country from anarchy began to wane by the second half of the 1970s.⁶³ Second, the tormenting accounts of the intervention raised the problem of writing critically in a period when revolution itself fell apart. In the novels of writers who sympathized with a leftist worldview, a more sophisticated political self-criticism started to emerge, one although dominated with pessimism, was part of an endeavor to transcend it. Themes like paranoia, blacklisting, and torture kept certain significance, but new horizons opened up as well.

63 The militancy of the right wing was never grasped as a threat as severe as the left wing in the 1970s. However, after the 1980 coup, members of the anti-communist wing were also punished to give the impression of fair balance in the treatment of the political radicalism. During the trials, the cadres of the Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) declared themselves a movement "whose cadres are in jail but whose views are in power." See Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet, Ocak, Dergâh: 12 Eylül'den 1990'lara Ülkücü Hareket* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994), 235.

Leftist women's writings promoted alternative perspectives. Some women writers, in these later works, started to cast a critical eye on oppression in a broader sense and made the gendered aspects of identity a very powerful center of gravity. Sevgi Soysal's *Şafak* (The Dawn), a sensational book that later came to be acknowledged as one of the highlights of the March 12 period was published in 1975. In *Şafak*, Soysal linked capitalism to patriarchy in a thrilling story of political exile, and represented sites of capitalist/patriarchal power in the settings of a city under martial law. Soysal's two other books *Yenişehirde Bir Öğle Vakti* (Noontime in Yenişehir) and *Yıldırım Bölge Kadınlar Koğuşu* (Yıldırım Area Women's Ward) also revolve around her experiences during the March 12 era. Emine Işınsu (Okçu) published *Sancı* (Stitch) in 1975. In her novel, Işınsu fictionalized the life story of Ertuğrul Dursun Önkuzu, "a martyr" of the right wing, focusing on the skirmishes that erupted between armed paramilitary groups of the left and the right. She claimed witness status for the members of the anticommunist youth, who sacrificed their lives in order to protect the nation against destructive Western ideological imports. Another right-wing writer, Sevinç Çokum, made her contribution with *Zor* (Hard) in 1977. Similar to Emine Işınsu's *Sancı*, Sevinç Çokum's *Zor* focused on the life of a boy of village origin, who comes to the city, and struggles in adapting to new manners and lifestyles. Çokum turned to the slums of Istanbul, and narrated how the disintegration of the family as a social formation contributed to the polarization of the political atmosphere.

In 1976, five novels that discuss the trauma of the military intervention with different accounts followed: Samim Kocagöz's *Tartışma* (Discussion), Demirtaş Ceyhun's *Yağmur Sıcağı* (Rain Fever), Oktay Rifat's *Bir Kadının Penceresinden* (From the Window of a Woman), Demir Özlü's *Bir Uzun Sonbahar* (A Long Autumn), and Pınar Kür's *Yarın Yarın* (Tomorrow Tomorrow). In *Tartışma*, Kocagöz illustrated the memories of his imprisonment in Davutpaşa. Ceyhun, in *Yağmur Sıcağı*, explored the inner struggles of politically engaged individuals, in a story that borrows from his life and propagates with monologues. Özlü's *Bir Uzun Sonbahar* is a thin disguise of his life, a novel also built upon intellectual self-questioning and self-criticism. Oktay Rifat, in *Bir Kadının Penceresinden*, painted a portrait of Turkey revolving around the lives of middle-class intellectuals. Each of these writers was engaged with different strains of leftist politics, and they

dealt in varying accounts with the transformation of the political polarization into a wave of violence in the society in the wake of the March 12 intervention. They provided accounts of the intellectual struggles of men and women, all trying to understand the incidents surrounding them.

After the boom in 1976, a profound silence fell on the March 12 novels. Toward the end of 1976, the atmosphere in the country became tense again. When the May 1977 riots organized by the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, DİSK) ended up in an ambush following unidentified gunshots, political conjunctures led to more chaos. A specter of another military intervention dominated the political discourses.

In 1979, Ayla Kutlu published *Kaçış* (Escape), Pınar Kür published *Asılacak Kadın* (Woman to Be Hanged), and Demir Özlü published *Bir Küçük Burjuvanın Gençlik Yılları* (Adolescent Years of a Petty Bourgeois). Kutlu's *Kaçış* is a novel that focuses on blind dedication to political aims and the burden such dedication brings to people's lives. This novel was a suggestion to look back at the March 12 experience in order to understand what the current atmosphere was bringing. Kür's *Asılacak Kadın* is built upon the silence of a woman accused of murder in court. Although she does not link the story directly to the throes of March 12, Kür touches upon issues central to the experience and develops a discussion on the justice of a patriarchal culture in *Asılacak Kadın*. Özlü's *Bir Küçük Burjuvanın Gençlik Yılları* incorporates the same existentialist concerns that characterize his earlier work, and conveys a critique of the modern individual during the turmoil of the political clashes in Turkey.

Two additional novels published in 1979 gathered wider attention. Tarık Buğra published *Gençliğim Eyvah* (Alas! My Youth) and Adalet Ağaoğlu published *Bir Düğün Gecesi* (A Wedding Night). Tarık Buğra's *Gençliğim Eyvah* is a novel that focuses on a clandestine movement aiming at anarchy, the leader of which is a frenetic and demonic man. *Bir Düğün Gecesi* depicts a wedding party which connects the life of the daughter of a cutthroat capitalist, who rejected her family's political orientation to become a revolutionary militant, to the life of a general's son, who is known to have obtained success from his role in establishing order during the events of March 12. The novel propagates the inner struggles of the guests at the wedding party, who question their individual histories.

When another military coup took place on 12 September 1980, it silenced all mass opposition overnight. Turkey fell into an oppressive regime more destructive than that of March 12. Those who survived the 12 March 1971 coup as activists dissolved after the 12 September 1980 coup. This last intervention was so destructive that a liberal medium, which allowed the questioning of the regime, could flourish only years after the intervention, and by the time such an atmosphere had formed, there was not a collective body of critical writers but only individuals dealing with the memories of September 12 separately. September 12 impaired people's engagement with oppositional politics irreversibly, and distanced writers from dealing with political issues in their works. A collective and critical literary interest, which challenges the official history and mainstream politics, is traded with personal freedoms.

STATE, COMMIES, GREYWOLVES: WHAT ABOUT MASCULINITY?

In 1970s Turkey, people were disillusioned by violent fights in the streets, cynical of the state as their protector, and ambivalent about generic slogans of political figures. The March 12 intervention came as an external trauma, which put individuals in search of identification, and made them rethink certain notions of political attachment as well as the basic tenets of being human. These novels participated in the reinstitution of dignity in masses during an atmosphere of political vengeance and anarchic disorder. There were involvements in social and political conflicts that they tended to narrativize. Such a look at March 12 novels indicates a post-structuralist and post-modern approach to literature because it challenges the idea of literary text as an individual end product and introduces the idea of an interactive relation between the text and its surroundings. It also shatters the old dogma which sees literature as a mirror of historical, social, and political realities "from a safe distance."⁶⁴ March 12 novels should be examined in a different way, not as "transparent

64 Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 7.

windows through which the past opens itself for inspection” in Stephen Greenblatt’s words, “but building blocks in the collective reality effect to which every cultural formation gives shape and meaning.”⁶⁵

Just like literature, gender is not a complete end product, either. To overcome the trauma of victimization, there is an escape to fantasies of power and masquerades of bravado in March 12 novels. This makes the “performative” nature of gender a central issue in the theoretical web of this book. My major cornerstone here is Judith Butler, who argues that the polarized gender distinction recognized in contemporary culture is produced by discourses of law, politics, science, and language. Following Louis Althusser’s theory of interpellation and Michel Foucault’s use of “discourse” as power, Butler writes that “there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results.”⁶⁶ Butler’s idea of performativity contests the presence of an essentially gendered subject in performance, and her insights about the “heterosexual matrix,” which causes a “gender interpellation,” gives us a powerful interrogation of how identities are formed and subjects are shaped into existence. Although Butler does not take masculinity per se at her explicit focus, her provocative look at gender has been influential in this book because of the fluctuating images of masculinity in March 12 novels.

I am particularly interested in things that make a man masculine along the Butlerian “heterosexual matrix,” and the fluidity of gender constructions. I am well aware that such a use of Butler’s theory means simplifying her idea of linguistic performativity as performance, in other words, as stage drama. Although Butler contributed to the confusion with her use of drag performance as an example of gender identity’s being a sequence of acts, she finally refutes the idea of a pre-existing performer behind the performance. In this sense, this book makes use of Butler, but it does not deny materiality and treat body as “pure text” because no such perspective is present in March 12 novels. In a period marked with torture, it was hard for

65 Pieters, *Moments of Negotiation*, 34.

66 Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 1–55. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 163–80.

March 12 writers to deny materiality altogether. March 12 novels link a journalistic tendency and interest in realism with post-structuralist views, and oscillate between essentialist and non-essentialist, verbal and biological construction of identities, making it hard for the reader to take sides with either camp.

On Butler's account, there are no self-evident truths around categories of identities such as "man" and "women," or "gay," "transsexual and so on. Her skepticism of categories and interest in the "normal" contributed to this book. Two other terms that are of pivotal importance for this book are hypermasculinity and hegemonic masculinity. The term hypermasculinity first appeared in a 1984 study by psychologists Donald L. Mosher and Mark Sirkin, who defined it with callous sexual attitudes towards women, belief in manliness of violence, and excitement found in danger.⁶⁷ Later, Ashis Nandy used this term in the study of colonial contexts.⁶⁸ By hypermasculinity, Nandy refers to an exaggeration of traditionally masculine traits, such as aggression and competition, to justify power relations. He notes that both the upper classes in England and elites in India sought to glorify masculine traits to justify their political power against the weak. He discusses how Indian men "saw their salvation in becoming more like the British, in friendship or in enmity."⁶⁹ Following Nandy, Revathi Krishnaswamy termed the feminization of colonial subjects as "effeminism."⁷⁰ The legitimization strategies of dominating masculinity are operational in this book since the history of March 12 can be linked to the history of cultural anti-colonialism in Turkey. Both the anti-Americanism of the leftist revolutionaries and the conservative (anticommunist) reaction against them invite a discussion on the "Americanization" of Turkey. Paradoxically, both camps rise in an attempt to protect the country from destructive influences of "the West," be it capitalism or communism. While analyzing the "East/West" divide, I also benefited from evaluations

67 Donald L. Mosher and Mark Serkin, "Measuring a macho personality constellation," *Journal of Research in Personality*, no. 18 (1984): 150–63.

68 Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: The Psychology of Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford, 1988).

69 Ibid., 7.

70 Revathi Krishnaswamy, *Effeminism: The Economy of Colonial Desire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

of emasculation as a product of capitalist modernity, such as Michael Kimmel's *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*.⁷¹

Hegemonic masculinity is a notion mainly associated with the work of R. W. (Raewyn) Connell. It relies on the adaptation of the Gramscian perspective about the term hegemony as the legitimization and naturalization of the interests of the powerful, to the gender order. Challenging essentialist gender theories, Connell et al. argued in their pioneering article of men's studies "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity" (1985) that being a man is a dynamic process, and it should be analyzed in connection to social power relations, considering class and race, and the interplay of power relations "with a division of labor and with patterns of emotional attachment."⁷² In Connell's words, the term hegemonic masculinity suggests, "at any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted."⁷³ This opens a new perspective to look at the overall power dynamics of gender, because it makes visible the hierarchy between men and offers a complex framework of patriarchy.

Some scholars prefer to speak of "hegemonic masculinities," arguing that the singular use of the term suggests homogeneity. But in their vision, too, the meaning attributed to the term hegemonic displays a culture of hierarchy between men.⁷⁴ A revaluation of the term came from Connell in 2005, in a collaborative paper with J. W. Messerschmidt, which underlines questions related to patriarchy, and reveals the problematic categorization of masculinity and femininity. The authors acknowledge that a model of global dominance is "clearly inadequate to our understanding of relations among groups of men and forms of masculinity, and of women's relation with dominant masculinities."⁷⁵

There are further inspirations from structural anthropology in the foundations of my reading because of the special focus on masculinity and the patriarchal power attributed to it. I turned to Claude Lévi-

71 Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

72 Tim Carrigan Robert Connell, and John Lee, "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity," in *The Masculinity Studies Reader*, eds. Rachel Adams and David Savran (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 112.

73 Robert Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 77.

74 Jeff Hearn, "From Hegemonic Masculinity to the Hegemony of Men," *Feminist Theory* 5, no. 1 (2004).

75 R. W. Connell, J. W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender & Society*, 19, no. 6 (2005): 829–59.

Strauss's definition of exogamous marriage as a relationship of exchange between men of women as gifts, which gives them the opportunity to become connected in bonds of kinship. This diplomacy, Lévi-Strauss argues, is the fundamental feature in the organization of the society.⁷⁶ Under the influence of Lévi-Strauss's work, anthropologists have treated the need to exchange women to avoid tribal incest. A variety of critics have built on Lévi-Strauss's argument, such as Gayle Rubin, Luce Irigaray, Heidi Hartmann, Theresa de Lauretis, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and discussed the triangulated bonds between men. Their arguments, as a whole, provide a convenient point of entry for this book to move into the complex problem of masculinity.

In her oft-cited essay "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex," (1975) Gayle Rubin suggests that male-to-male bonds provide the foundations of the integral part of human associations.⁷⁷ She shows how a certain type of gender asymmetry is formed in the diplomacy of exchanging women, and how it relegates women to a subordinate position in their relations with men. Projecting this asymmetry to Freudian explanations of gender, Rubin reveals a deep structure in the oppression of women. Trafficking women, she argues, makes a woman "the conduit of a relationship rather than a partner to it," and this pattern gets transmitted in time to form different visions that devalue women as exchange objects, such as Freud's theory of Oedipus complex.

In her "The Sex Which Is Not One" (1977) Luce Irigaray says that hom(m)osexuality describes the system of exchange under patriarchy, which make women function as conduits. Along the same lines, in her seminal essay "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism," (1979) Heidi Hartman defines patriarchy as a social and economic structure in which men "are united in their shared relationship of dominance over their women."⁷⁸ Elaborating on the idea

76 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 115.

77 Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 157.

78 Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union," in *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: A Debate on Class and Patriarchy* (London: Polity Press, 1986), 14.

of women's passive position in a realm that provides men with the activity, Theresa de Lauretis suggests in *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (1984) that the subject of classical narrative is masculine. The masculine hero is capable of progressing and changing, while the feminine constitutes the space of his desire.

Focusing on male bondings over women, Eve Sedgwick argues in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985) that through their competition for the female, two male rivals bond homosocially, establishing and ensuring the structure for maintaining and transmitting patriarchal power.⁷⁹ Sedgwick's work, which questions masculinity's binary relationship with femininity, is very important and opened new horizons.⁸⁰ Sedgwick directs our attention to the details of gender asymmetry: masculinity becomes a dividing line along features such as courage, strength, and stiffness, and divides men into camps based on a scale of masculinity. In March 12 novels, these features appear in dramatic accounts of maltreatment and torture, and create a hierarchy between men.

Masculinity as an institution is also an important focus of interest in this book. I turned to analyses of state, bureaucracy, prison, and military solidarity to constitute the theoretical path of institutionalized masculinities. Among other studies, it was George Mosse's depiction of the modern masculine ideal as a combination of certain values in *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, and his insistence on women's presence in the "own self-image" of men, which was primarily thought-provoking for me.⁸¹ In a similar vein, I owe to Klaus Theweleit, who examined works by Freikorps, German paramilitary men, and showed that the "feminine" located within these men generated disturbing anxieties.⁸² Theweleit's discussion of the proto-fascist male psyche, its phobic resistances against femininity, and misogyny in *Male Fantasies* evoked challeng-

79 Eve Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 25.

80 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Gosh, Boy George, You Must Be Awfully Secure in Your Masculinity!" in *Constructing Masculinity*, ed. Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis, and Simon Watson (New York: Routledge, 1995), 11–20.

81 George Mosse, *The Image of Man: the Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 53.

82 Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

ing ideas about the fascist rhetoric that dominate a number of March 12 novels. Both Mosse's and Theweleit's analyses of fascism in relation to masculinity offered a fresh way of looking at the masculine heroes of the novels.

The idea of women as objects of exchange, forced definitions of gender, performative acts to fulfill these forced definitions, and problems about hegemony, hegemonic masculinity, and male homosocial bonding to keep patriarchal power in hand in various types of solidarity and institutions are all at work in March 12 novels. These books question common notions about sex and gender, and center around the fluidity of identity. Although definitions of gender and power reflect a lack of consensus between disciplines, their primacy in social sciences is an established fact. By assuming a connection between gender and power, or between gender and authoritarian or destructive personal and political structures, I am situating my analysis within the work of a wide range of theorists who attempt to link the incorporation of gender relations and theories of power.

CHAPTER 1
*Quixotic and Hurt: Victimized Men
as a Stable Ground*

Books at the explicit focus of this chapter, *Büyük Gözaltı*, *Yaralısn*, and *İsa'nın Güncesi* explore how masculinity does physical or psychological harm to men. All three novels are grim tales of deprivation that deal, more squarely than other March 12 novels, with a crisis of masculinity initiated by the terrors of a violent power abuse. The crisis is not only because of the tensions between the subjective experiences of men and dominating ideologies of the 1970s, but also due to the physical attack by the state apparatus, which pushed leftist activists into victim positions deprived of power. Power abuse was an overwhelming reality for the society during the events of March 12. Hence, it is an essential and characteristic attribute in almost all examples of the corpus. However, in these three novels, we explicitly find the terror as built on a castrating state power with paternalistic attitudes. Management of fear appears as a defining theme, underlining the fragility of individuals, and also questioning the attitudes and discourses necessary for a man to be identified as a man. In each novel, the male hero is positioned in a state of ambiguity, trying to understand the reasons of his being oppressed and victimized by the system and its brutal agents, and attempting to find a proper manner to answer the oppression back.

These three novels present a full and largely sympathetic account of men's reactions to fear; hence, they lay the foundations of an analysis of March 12 novels, from the lens of masculinity studies. There are several studies on men's reactions under stress, and scholars worldwide try to illuminate the contradictions men experience within positions of power. Michael Kimmel, for example, finds homophobia and men's fear of other men as founding factors of the dominant views of masculinity.¹ In discussing the title of *Taking It Like a Man*, David Savran points out the instability of masculinity and un-

1 Michael Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity," in *Theorizing Masculinities*, ed. H. Brod and M. Kaufman (London: Sage, 1994), 119–41.

derlines that even men must act like a man.² *Büyük Gözaltı*, *Yaralısın*, and *İsa'nın Güncesi* give voice to frightened, harassed, and imprisoned men, and explore mens' approximation of masculinity, put forward by Kimmel and Savran. The images of victimized men serve as a stable ground for all three of the novels, but none of the writers attempt to make heroes out of destroyed men.

Büyük Gözaltı, *Yaralısın*, and *İsa'nın Güncesi* engage issues related to identity formation within a broader and more complex exploration of the human condition. The protagonists question the meaning of life and the secrets of existence, and attempt to reach some deeper level of being. Both *Büyük Gözaltı* and *Yaralısın* have ordinary men at their explicit center and use irony in a similar manner as Jean Paul Sartre's short story titled "The Wall" ("Le Mur") (1939). Elaine Scarry cites this story in her influential book, *The Body in Pain*—a political prisoner of the fascist government in Spain submits a false testimony to his interrogators about the whereabouts of a rebel leader and while waiting for his execution, he woefully learns his sentence is temporarily reversed since the man was captured on the spot he had made up.³ *Büyük Gözaltı* and *Yaralısın* draw a similar conclusion of arbitrariness and absurdity.

Similar to *Büyük Gözaltı* and *Yaralısın*, victimization is central to the story of *İsa'nın Güncesi*. This novel, too, is a narration of deprivation and lack of freedom, but it deals with repressive measures, brutality, and torture allegorically. *İsa'nın Güncesi* does not rely on a prison metaphor as *Büyük Gözaltı* and *Yaralısın* does; rather it utilizes bureaucracy as a symbolic repressive regime. Despite the fact that it stages an uncanny atmosphere of oppression that symbolically alludes to the military coup of 1971, Anday's concern in *İsa'nın Güncesi* about the corruptibility of power is not rigidly fastened to a military/civil dichotomy. The powerful dominates the weak, regardless of gender differences. Anday masterfully plays with the idea of performativity and shows that all cultural definitions including gender, power, agency, and sacrifice are constructs. *İsa'nın Güncesi* should not be taken at face value as an allegorical political criticism of March 12, since in addition to its abstract critique, the novel also

2 David Savran, *Taking It Like a Man: White Masculinity, Masochism, and Contemporary American Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

3 Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 30.

provides a dark tale about the destruction of an individual by subverting the existing order of gender and sexuality. These texts are suggestive of the powerful clash of competing cultural values with gender as well as politics, and they question the possibility of challenging the natural order of things. This includes a change in the pre-established conventions of masculinity. In this sense, all three novels question hegemonic masculinity. The term hegemonic masculinity invites a discussion of the ability to control, dominate, or rule over the non-man, the other. However, to identify the other is complicated, as the germ of the term, hegemony, also derives its power from race, class, or other distinctions not related to gender. The concept of hegemonic masculinity, as developed by R. Connell, indicates that masculinity is a cross product, and its rules can be bent, if not broken. Connell, in *Gender and Power* (1987) and *Masculinities* (1995), underlined the hierarchical scheme that makes masculinity dominant over femininity. Protagonists of *Büyük Gözaltı*, *Yaralısin*, and *İsa'nın Güncesi* demonstrate and discuss modes of masculine behavior that involve toughening, fortitude and bravery, before the very development of the term hegemonic masculinity. The authoritarian male figure is compared and contrasted with a range of masculinities, some of which are fractured and traumatized under oppression. The power and potency of the authoritarian masculinity are ruefully acknowledged as the primary features that contribute to its hegemonic role.

In these novels, torture is also an important center of gravity. In *The Body in Pain*, Elaine Scarry argues that torturers literally unmake the world of their victims by gradually reducing them to a state in which they are unable “to speak, experience, or imagine any reality outside their pain.”⁴ Under torture, the protagonists of *Büyük Gözaltı*, *Yaralısin*, and *İsa'nın Güncesi* pass into such a mood and find themselves in a tormenting discussion on being a real man.⁵ Vulnerability is a state of inferiority composed of a variety of positions of non-manliness, as explained by Kate Millett in *The Politics of Cruelty: An Essay on the Literature of Political Imprisonment*. Millett argues that “under torture one is first reduced to a woman, then to a child, and as the torture creates a woman out of any human material being

4 Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 60.

5 David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 41.

tortured, he also creates a child, the citizen as child, frightened before the great, all-powerful state.”⁶

Torture is the ultimate act of state power, and it links the violent aspects of masculinity to the authority of the state.⁷ With stories that illustrate how people were hurt under it, *Büyük Gözaltı*, *Yaralısin*, and *İsa'nın Güncesi* challenge the righteousness of the military regime. Their stories illustrate the profound pessimism of the intelligentsia under ill treatment and pressure. All three novels delineate a struggle with oppression and deal with a traumatic sense of solitude that arises from the submissive position of their protagonists. The problematic issue of these novels is the protagonists' inability to construct themselves as powerful male subjects. They bring a protagonist in solitude to the fore and show how the overall control of an individual creates an oppressed self that becomes quotidian. Psychological and physical accounts of surveillance, incarceration, and torture are revealed, looking at the pain and trauma from different perspectives. The narrations enact gender attitudes as intricate problems and criticize, sometimes with a wry accent, the attempt to subscribe to a macho posturing in order to respond to oppression from the position of a victim. These novels show us that the established belief that March 12 novels produced images of men idealized for their courage, outstanding achievements, and noble qualities is simply not true. Otherwise, why do we find men in psychological and physical crises, if all March 12 literature created were heroes whose legacy grew bigger with their violent encounter with torture?

MEN UNDER SURVEILLANCE: COMING OF AGE IN ÇETİN ALTAN'S *BÜYÜK GÖZALTI*

Büyük Gözaltı is built on a grievous imprisonment in a custody cell and a troublesome life under pressure in a persecutory culture.⁸ Altan engages with the Foucauldian discussion of the rise of disciplinary power focusing on the struggles of a political prisoner. He

6 Kate Millett, *Politics of Cruelty: An Essay on the Literature of Political Imprisonment* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1994), 190.

7 Ibid., 17.

8 Çetin Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*, (Istanbul: İnkılap Kitabevi, 1999).

enhances it with observations about the foundations of a disciplinary society via the testimonials of the prisoner about his past. The novel heavily borrows from Altan's memories of imprisonment in the heydays of March 12 and depicts the spectacular story of a man fighting oppressive measures not only while under custody and against his guardians, but also throughout his entire life against the restrictions of the society.⁹ *Büyük Gözaltı* is a novel that gained much of its reputation due to the real-life experiences of its writer. A careful reading of Altan's life story not only catches similarities between his actual imprisonment during the throes of military rule and the one depicted in the novel, but also recognizes haunting parallels between Altan's life story and the coming-of-age narrative of the protagonist.¹⁰ The book is unique in its post-structuralist approach to masculinity within a rather structuralist coming-of-age story. The series of transformations of the protagonist toward adult masculinity is backed up in the novel with his insistent efforts to continue to become a man, as Altan makes it clear that it is not possible to remain a man without constant recurring efforts.

Repeatedly referring to networks hidden in and enhanced by the culture, the protagonist in *Büyük Gözaltı* channels a sociopolitical critique of power. Altan directs his social criticism toward targets such as the family, school, and society. More particularly, the narration also reveals the Foucauldian argument that the body becomes the site on which disciplinary power plays itself out in parallel to this social critique.¹¹ How the realm of the male psyche is influenced by the surveillance and control of his body becomes the main point of the

9 When Çetin Altan was taken into custody after the military intervention in 1971, he was one of the pioneering figures of the leftist opposition outside the parliament. Immediately after his release, *Büyük Gözaltı* was on the desk of his publisher. Bilgi Yayınevi published the novel in 1972, and a year later it received the Orhan Kemal Novel Award, one of the most prestigious national literary prizes in Turkish literature. When his novel was awarded, Altan had already been sent back to prison, this time facing different accusations. The prestigious publishing company Flammarion published the French translation of *Büyük Gözaltı* in 1975, when the novel was in its fifth edition in Turkey.

10 Several individuals and incidents mentioned in *Büyük Gözaltı* also appear in Altan's memoirs of his childhood and youth. Çetin Altan, *Kavak Yelleri ve Kasırgalar* (Istanbul: İnkılap Kitabevi, 2004).

11 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), 48.

narration. Featuring a post-Freudian child in the onset of puberty, the novel offers an articulate map into the territory of prepubescent sexuality, an area rarely traversed and seldom properly documented in Turkish literature. By shedding light onto the intricate link between power and masculinity, Altan suggests the approval of a specific type of masculinity as the real problem of military interventions, as it causes support to go with power and autocratic views. Hence he suggests that there is an organic link between the Turkish society's affinity for power and the reoccurring military regimes.

Büyük Gözaltı has an abstract style and does not include any direct reference to the military intervention. The novel anonymously illustrates the instances of fear and trouble experienced by individuals under the tensions of tyrannical powers. A desperate man under custody speaks directly to his readers. Surveillance surpasses the physical environment of the prison cell, which constitutes the major setting, and becomes a metaphor for delineating the troublesome accounts of growing into a man in a traditional society. The trauma of being imprisoned has attracted the attention of some of the critics of *Büyük Gözaltı*, while the drama hidden in the discussion of male sexuality has mostly been overlooked. Critics turned to more important issues mentioned in the novel, such as incarceration without evidence, maltreatment, and so on, but did not pay much attention to the gender anxieties of the protagonist.

Büyük Gözaltı opens as the forty-four-year-old anonymous protagonist of the novel finds himself charged with murder in a prison cell, in some unidentified time and setting. The protagonist describes how he is waiting for a formal examination, similar to Franz Kafka's famous character Joseph K. of *The Trial*. Later, when he refers to his memories, it becomes clear that he recollects a childhood in Istanbul. His memories provide a unique perspective of the history of a middle-class family, presenting the nuclear family and relatives of the protagonist as well as the residential servants whom he befriended. Memories of his household and social interactions set the stage for the observations of the protagonist of gender, power, and class differences, as they portray his development into a class-conscious adult man. The protagonist recalls how he discovered himself through his encounters with repression, experiences of love, and troubles with the strictures of adult life.

Büyük Gözaltı constitutes a coming-of-age plot intertwined with

a loss of innocence, which casts the novel as an example of *bildungsroman*, chronicling the shaping of an individual in a continuous negotiation between individual desires and the requirements of society. As the protagonist recalls his childhood, he immerses the reader into the power dynamics of his nuclear family, which consists of an elderly paternal grandmother who wanders the house in her bedclothes with her amber prayer beads in her hands, a father who isolates himself in a room with his mother for hours, and who every now and then attempts to kiss her hands and feet, and an ill-tempered young woman (his mother) who keeps slamming doors for not having the attention she expects.¹² The house is a metaphorical prison for the protagonist, an inquisitive boy with a rich fantasy life.

Domestic enclosure is a metaphorical prison also for his psychotic mother. The protagonist recalls his mother as an abusive symbol of discipline at home, who did not refrain from punishing him physically. She is an angry woman who often slaps the protagonist to make him subscribe to more obedient and tranquil behavior. The mother is the principal figure of the authoritative other; she is whom the protagonist attempts to provide a meaningful identity. As a free-spirited child, the protagonist tries to make himself recognized as a person rather than property, but at the same time, he occasionally feels a desperate need to belong to someone more powerful than him. He recalls his efforts to obtain the attention and parental love of his mother, who often suffered from nervous breakdowns, as she found herself pitted against the alliance of her husband and his elderly mother. Central to his drama, the protagonist confesses to himself, was a desire for recognition, causing him to side respectively with both camps when a disagreement occurred in the family: his mother on one side and his father and grandmother on the other. He also recalls finding himself seeking personal masculine identification with his father, a weak, over-indulgent, and suppressed figure, “manned” by his wife.

A striking opposition surfaces as the memories about his father slowly unfold: in contrast to the patronizing attitudes of his mother,

12 “Elinde kehribar tespihi, evde gecelik entarisi ile dolaşan ve yüzü hiç gülmeyen bir ihtiyar babaanne ile saatlerce bir odaya kapanıp ikide birde onun elini ayağını öpmeye kalkan bir adamla, kendisine beklendiği önem verilmediği için, kapıları çarparak dolaşan hırçın, genç bir kadın.” Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*, 55.

the protagonist fails to figure his father out as a patriarchal master in his own home. The novel establishes the beginnings of a critique of masculinity with the slavish image of the father, and the protagonist's confusion about the real master in the household. He fails to perceive his father as a real man who possesses strength and power, from whom he should learn to value and embody the masculine characteristics, and for whom he should demonstrate his masculinity.¹³ The story deepens the critique of masculinity pointing out the sharp difference between the identity of the father in the workplace and at home. The workplace, which allocates the basics of the gender binary, indicates how male identity came to be configured through work, in the eyes of a small child. The protagonist recalls his father as the breadwinner that subscribes to a mature masculine role, in the hierarchical and competitive conditions of the organizational network of his workplace. He remembers his father as an authority figure who swears at superior bureaucrats and his colleagues with an aggressive vocabulary.¹⁴ Whereas at home, observing his father as a subservient figure, ritually kissing his elderly mother's cheeks, hands, and bending down to kiss her feet, the protagonist recalls finding himself confused.¹⁵

The need for gender identification constitutes the main motive of the boyhood experiences of the protagonist. *Büyük Gözaltı* successfully delineates the entrance of a child into the complicated world of gender, with the compound image of two oppositional masculinities promoted by the father figure and the contradictions raised by his mother's aggressiveness, which shadows her role as caregiver. With a female performer of male roles as a key character, the narration indicates that performances of masculinity can be detached from male bodies. This speaks to the Butlerian argument that gender is not something people own, and that things which make up one's own gender are from the very beginning, "outside oneself, beyond oneself, in a sociality that has no single author."¹⁶ To complicate the

13 Stephen Bergman, "Men's Psychological Development: A Relational Perspective," in *Men's Psychological Development: A New Psychology of Men*, eds. Ronald Levant and William Pollack (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 68–90.

14 Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*, 40.

15 Ibid., 7.

16 Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 1.

dilemma of gender, Altan turns to biology: the discoveries of the protagonist about the gender-powered dynamics of the household go hand in hand with an uncovering of his burgeoning sexuality. He recalls their household servant Fatma, the poor orphan girl taken into the household for domestic work and for her own protection, as his first playmate in the game of sex.¹⁷

The protagonist recalls Fatma acting as a devoted mother would, caressing the protagonist, feeding him, and accompanying him in toilet training. The memory of her touching and kissing his genitals takes the protagonist back into his preliminary anxieties about sexual desire.¹⁸ Deflected from his actual mother onto Fatma as the mother-figure-turned-lover, the protagonist recalls how his desires were transferred into an unrequited love, which Fatma entertained as the infantile attraction of a small child. Their secret games turn into informative lessons, where Fatma provides the protagonist with his first lessons of sex, such as that males have penises and females do not, and men put their penises in women.¹⁹ This consolidates Fatma in the memories of his past, as the only member of the household interested in his senses, feelings, and curiosity. He recalls her as the only person in the house who sees him as a human being rather than property. As an uneducated girl of probable rural origin, Fatma's tenderness carries a critique of the false virtues of high-class urban family life and comprises a preliminary class-gender debate. Lower classes, symbolized by the affectionate image of the orphan housemaid, are argued to have more intense and explicit emotional patterns in their relations, while higher classes define their emotional bondings with material terms and treat one another as property.

The gender problem becomes more complex in the house of the maternal grandfather where the protagonist observes an alternative version of masculinity; a hypermasculinity as Ashis Nandy called it, without the colonial context that formed Nandy's medium of discussion, but with exaggerated forms of virility and violent suppression of the non-man.²⁰ The grandfather, Paşa Dede, diminishes the

17 Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*, 19.

18 Ibid., 21.

19 Ibid., 21–22.

20 Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: The Psychology of Colonialism* (Oxford and Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), 9.

breadwinner masculinity of the protagonist's father by his wealth and also invalidates him as an authority figure with his tyrannical personality. The erect posture of Paşa, his being an athletic ex-cavalier and a fierce figure of authority in his own household, stages a violent masculine performance to the protagonist, and intimidates him. His temporary stay at the grandfather's pavilion turns into a repressive experience, as the brutal grandfather forces the protagonist to accept his superior authority. He gives orders to him at the dinner table, makes him eat the food he hates, and pushes him to memorize the multiplication table. These scenes leave a dramatic impact as Altan treats the forced nutrition and other pressures as the dissolution of the boundaries of the self, a metaphoric rape.

The narration shows the protagonist choosing to learn masculinity from the values represented by the grandfather, since he feels that he can beat him only by mimicking him. This is reminiscent of Nandy's discussion on the powerful attachment between the colonizer and the colonized, and the loss of self in his analyses of the attempt to identify with the suppressor as a complex mental response to the act of domination. His grandfather tortures his childhood, but also evokes great admiration in the protagonist. No matter how hard he tries, the protagonist fails to see acceptance and because of his failure in math, he ends up in a chamber arrest, another symbolic incarceration.²¹

The memories of the protagonist also introduce a discussion on class. Another orphan maid, Fehime, replaces Fatma as a surrogate mother figure in the compound. Fehime and the protagonist engage in a warm relationship until her sudden dismissal from the pavilion with an accusation of theft on false grounds, which causes a traumatic break-up. He recognizes that Fehime, by being a servant, left him helpless in the first place. He acknowledges, at quite a young age, that class status and financial wealth provide people with power for domination over others.²² He remembers observing class inequality as a reality being taken for granted by the members of his family and recalls Fehime's dismissal as a tragic incident that brought him in close contact with the class-based strictures of life.

21 Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*, 64.

22 Ibid., 119.

From an underdeveloped problem of class struggle, the problem of mastery and domination extends to the realms of gender. In his encounter with rituals of aggressively patriarchal masculinity performed by his grandfather, the protagonist experiences repression and violence. The disciplining masculine power and its authoritarian threats depicted by the image of the ex-cavalier grandfather shouting commands are chilling metaphors that symbolize a country's being ruled by aggressive military figures for its own safety and well-being. In the authoritarian figure of his grandfather, the protagonist distinguishes domination as a masculine trait. He also discovers that he has to identify with the role of a dominator, in order to challenge his powerlessness and exert his own authority on life. This inserts the protagonist, irrevocably, into a rite of passage toward adult masculinity.

In parallel to his discoveries, the narration also develops the protagonist's growing anxiety about becoming a proper male. He recognizes that Fatma's plain explanations had given him only a limited part of the story, as guests of his grandmother chide the protagonist about his belated circumcision. Altan places the story of the medical transformation of boys to men into the greater story of maturation and development with a feeling of terror. Psychoanalytically, circumcision is the sublimation of castration anxiety, as Harry Brod says, the son's symbolic separation from the mother and subjugation to the father.²³ The protagonist seems happy about the forthcoming stage of his masculinity, but he cannot help his fears. He finds himself looking forward to the irreversible mark that will make him an appropriate male, but terrorized also because of the pain that the removal of the foreskin will give him. In the eyes of the protagonist, circumcision stands for a rite of passage, terrorizing and elevating at the same time, which will install masculinity in his body. He understands that he will have to reinstate his masculinity and prove it every now and then, when he is sent to a boarding school exclusively for boys and finds himself surrounded by a system organizing the masculinities into a hierarchy of types, topped by a masculinity that tyrannizes the weak.

23 Harry Brod, "Circumcision," in *International Encyclopedia of Man and Masculinities*, eds. Michael Flood, Judith Kegan Gardiner, Bob Pease, Keith Pringle (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 67–69.

Just like the chamber arrest by his grandfather, the boarding school is another symbolic incarceration, which is intended to link the childhood sufferings of the protagonist with power, to his actual state of imprisonment in the custody cell. The memories of the boarding school further dramatize the feeling of helplessness under repression. The protagonist recalls how a disciplinary authority similar to his grandfather welcomed him at school with orders about meals and bed timings.²⁴ The boarding school memories of the protagonist draw a captivating picture of the hidden tensions beneath male socialization and show how seeking connection and independence at the same time became a source of conflict in young male lives.²⁵ In this boy culture, there is an endless round of competition and a fear of effeminacy, which turns every single act into a performance.

Butler writes in her introduction to *Undoing Gender*: one does not “do” one’s gender alone. One is always “doing” with or for another, even if the other is only imaginary.²⁶ Altan likewise underlines the collectivity of masculinity. The protagonist recalls his classmates masturbating at the lectures of a female teacher and testifies to himself, his imposed masculinity. He thinks back on how he discovered his body, under the pressures of the information that it is manly to be aroused when gazing at women and fantasizing about them. The relationship among the boys regarding acceptance as men invites bullying as the primary pattern, and it also forces them to create innovative stories about fictional relationships with the other sex. The young male’s discovery about adult masculinity is confused by his masculine pursuits, the arousal offered by masturbation, and the sense of guilt that accompanies it. The protagonist also remembers how he attempted to seduce women out of calculation rather than sentiment, and to turn some fictional accounts of lovemaking into reality. He tries to initiate sexual intercourse first with a servant of the house, in which he is accommodated during the weekends as a guest of his father’s friend, and after that, with the skinny daughter of the neighbor of his maternal grandmother. Each of these nerve-racking attempts fail, but produce similar stories of success to be told to friends at the boarding school.

24 Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*, 184.

25 Stephen Bergman, “Men’s Psychological Development: A Relational Perspective,” in *Men’s Psychological Development: A New Psychology of Men*, eds. Ronald Levant and William Pollack (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 68–90.

26 Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 1.

The memories of his awkward endeavors toward initiating a sexual relationship make the protagonist think, in the uncanny custody cell, that he used to evaluate sex as a battle. He discovers his destructive habit of despising the emotional. He compares himself to a spider waiting for flies.²⁷ Toward the end of the novel, the memories of his first sexual experience in a brothel with a prostitute resembling Fatma, mix with the memory of his first kiss with some respectable girl at a ball. The odyssey is finalized with the sudden death of the protagonist's father.²⁸ Eventually, the Oedipal plot is completed as the father dies and the battle ends in victory with the protagonist celebrating his triumph of becoming a real man by having women. The fear of not being manly enough, which is caused by the weak image of his father, gets resolved as the protagonist beats his rivals and affirms his Oedipal victory by his success with women.

The battle illustrated in this coming-of-age/loss-of-innocence plot has several common points with the battle illustrated in the plot of incarceration. Incarceration not only symbolizes the loss of freedom for a man but it also alludes to the traumatization of his masculine agency. The custody story on the real-time axis delineates another fierce struggle against the law of the father: in this struggle, the state and its agents become substitute images for the powerful father image. The Oedipal struggle becomes a metaphor for the political rebellion of an individual against state policies, in his attempt to win the love of the motherland. The custody plot introduces the protagonist as an adult man. He explores the difficulties inherent in solitary confinement and the quotidian details of life in a cell, and attempts to solve the mystery behind the unruly penal practices that victimized him.

The mechanical aspects of prison are communicated with the metallic bareness of the custody cell. The protagonist finds himself trapped within walls surrounding an iron bed, a table, and an iron chair.²⁹ The search of his personal belongings and the seizure of certain items constitute the regimenting of prison life with assaults on individual agency and privacy. The guards, after a quick search, confiscate the protagonist's shaving blade as a measure to prevent him from harming himself and leave him pained with the idea of suicide. With the repressive and callous attitudes of the guards, the custody-

27 Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*, 265.

28 Ibid., 270–72.

29 Ibid., 5.

cell becomes a piercing site of emasculation. Exposing himself to the scrutiny of other men and their proprietary gazes, the protagonist experiences his position as a feminized one, surrounded by anxieties about the deprivation of power. He feels like property, while the guards engender their positions. The feeling of being property in some higher agency's command gets elaborated, as the protagonist discovers the details of his imprisonment.

Although absent from his vision, torture is made implicitly evident by the sounds coming from other cells. Torture, likewise, is a means to undo subjectivity and masculinity. The protagonist feels depressed and imagines himself being violently beaten and tortured. He tries to prepare himself for his encounter with the guards. Guards, parental figures who replace the figures of the mother and the grandfather in the plot composed of memories, push the protagonist into a self-questioning of power. A powerful castration anxiety emerges as a result of serious panic in the real-time custody plot, further linking the childhood patterns to the adult life of the protagonist. It is as if the experience of being in custody and under sexually oriented threats marked a new threshold to be exceeded, a gap to be jumped over, and a war to be battled in order to be a manly-man, similar to circumcision. Custody is just another education in masculinity.

Attached to the anxieties about power and male sexuality, the terror of being in prison raises the tension of the story in an uncanny manner because of the inconsistent behavior of the guardians. They deepen the mystery of the unidentified murder that placed the protagonist in this custody cell by increasing the feeling of insecurity. In the course of the story, the conflicting attitudes of the guardians become a major tool of psychological torture. The trustworthy quality of the protagonist as a narrator becomes questionable, as guardians do not accept his versions of facts and insist on theirs. The protagonist finds himself doubting his own consciousness and fails to construct a clear idea of what really has been happening.

While waiting for a formal interrogation, the protagonist becomes delusional and starts blaming himself for unidentified homicides and for the death of his father's brothers, an incident that took place long before his birth.³⁰ In torment, he creates a large list of murders and he starts hearing voices from his imaginary victims, each forcing him

30 Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*, 47.

to testify to his/her significant murder. The protagonist turns the custody into a role-playing game to avoid a sense of despair. He eventually transforms his captivity into a one-man show, by distorting the reality and transferring his position from a victim to a man, which claims a similar alliance with his gazers. Behind the toilet door, he demotes the soldier accompanying him to an object:

The door was kept open always, even when I defecated. The soldier was waiting next to me. And he was watching. At first it was very difficult for me to defecate like this. Then I started to neglect him. He was watching me and I was straining, keeping half an eye on him.³¹

In this new vision, it becomes ambiguous who is watching who. Due to the indefinite period ahead of him, the protagonist attempts to hold on to such a reconstructed vision; yet deep inside, conscious of his misery, he still feels sure of his innocence and never stops expecting to be released from this unreasonable custody. He fills out forms to be sent to the authorities for a motion about his situation.³²

Altan projects the patriarchal discipline on the authoritarian state's brutal education. The ultimate crisis of masculinity surfaces, as the guards eventually force the protagonist out of the cell in a ceremonious manner, making him feel as if he is walking to his execution. The narration takes on a sneering tone as the protagonist attempts to formulate a noble last sentence, in order to make himself one of the unforgettable figures in history just before his death. Searching for the proper words, he finds himself enveloped in anxiety. When the idea of death suddenly imposes a deep impotency, it makes finding a phenomenal phrase unimportant. He feels as if he was waiting for his mother's sudden slap on his face, or for one of his grandfather's aggressive reactions, such as dangling his infantile body from the window.³³

He sees two alternative modes of behavior in the midst of fear: to laugh at death like a real manly-man, or to cry and become devas-

31 "Büyük abdest ederken de apteshanenin kapısı açık kalıyordu. Süngülü karşımda bekliyordu. Ve beni seyrediyordu. Önce çok zor gelmişti böyle abdest etmek. Sonra aldırmamaya başlamıştım. O bana bakıyor, ben de ona baka baka ıkınıyordum." Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*, 100–101.

32 Ibid., 123.

33 Ibid., 153.

tated by the fear of it like a non-man. It is at this bewildering moment that pain shifts to pleasure along gender lines. This ironic twist is communicated in the narration with the illusionary images of the protagonist's grandparents, who criticize him for not behaving manly enough. As the protagonist collapses and starts to cry, his paternal grandmother appears in a vision looking down on him, and grilling his current behavior. The maternal grandfather, Paşa dede, follows her in another vision, swearing at the killers dauntlessly, as a real man would do.³⁴ Finding himself unable to fulfill neither such an aggressive role nor one that embodies a noble pleasure in death, the protagonist feels a deep shame about himself.

The melodrama swiftly turns into comedy, as the protagonist is sent back to his cell after moments of humiliation at the hands of the soldiers. In the comfort of his cell, the protagonist subscribes to a more firm masculinity. He embraces his voice as a phallic symbol and attempts to prove himself masculine by yelling at the guards:

I walked toward the door, there were watchman waiting with guns turned inside the cell, standing. In an authoritarian voice I wouldn't expect from myself, I said:

"Bring a barber to me."

I was hoping for them to move toward me and shoot or something like that. But in a gentle voice, they said:

"Our shift will end in a quarter, mister. We shall take care of this then."

An "alright" not as bossy as my previous words came out of my mouth. And I started wandering in the cell all over again.³⁵

The faked anger neatly underscores the artificiality of the masculine masquerade. The protagonist's swinging between the emasculated position of a helpless man in custody and the tough position of a

34 Ibid., 155.

35 "Kapıya yürüdüm, kapıda nöbetçiler tomsonları içeri dönük duruyorlardı. Beklemediğim bir sertlikte:

– Berber çağırın bana ulan, dedim.

Üstüme yürüsünler ateş etsinler falan istiyordum. Oysa gayet yumuşak bir sesle:

– Nöbetin bitmesine bir çeyrek var bey, o zaman söyleriz, dediler. Demincek ki kadar sert olmayan bir peki çıktı ağzımdan. Ve yine başladım dolaşmaya." Altan, *Büyük Gözaltı*, 155.

man dancing with death communicates the instability of traumatized masculinity.

Nandy notes that colonized men adopt hypermasculinity as a compensation for their loss of power: they attempt to resist by becoming the counterplayers of the rulers according to the established rules and positioning themselves in a frame of reference within which the oppressed do not seem weak, degraded and distorted men.³⁶ Altan sees such role playing inherent to masculinity regardless of colonial contexts. His critique of men's inclination toward power targets the security of traditional authoritarianism and hegemonic role models produced by it. Some literary critics have criticized Altan for unnecessarily making excessive reference to sexuality and using a disturbingly explicit discourse when talking about sex. He is charged with degrading human condition to its lowest position.³⁷ In my view, the sexual dimension of the novel is central, and it is made explicitly so. It punctuates that the critical target of the novel in terms of authoritarianism is not only military but a specific notion of masculinity approved and supported by the masses. It is more productive in yielding new and challenging insights to read the novel alternatively as an example of the ways in which surveillance, repression, and control interact with male sexuality.

Büyük Gözaltı is a novel that speaks frankly about male sexuality in pre-puberty and puberty without being prim or salacious. Contrary to the shortsighted criticism that is automatically associated with a political agenda due to Altan's real-life experiences in politics and prison, the novel is ultimately a haunting tale that transcends political clichés. It depicts a little boy in his field of battle, capturing the tensions of his family and his burgeoning sexuality, who later in his adult life fights similar battles under the oppression of greater powers. What happens in *Büyük Gözaltı* in the prison cell is an indicator of the oppression in Turkey during the 1970s. Altan transposes the Oedipal struggle in the household into the much broader context of citizenship in an oppressive state, and delineates some painful webs of relationships, in which individuals' engagements with owners of power are defined. In this rather broad and elaborate story

36 Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: The Psychology of Colonialism* (Oxford and Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), 11.

37 Atilla Özkırımlı, *Romanların Dünyasında* (Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, 1994).

of “the law of the father,” the novel draws a stunning picture of the tactless psychological torture of a prisoner and also successfully casts a critical eye on the tensions of the masculine role that rages against the hypocrisy of a society.

Büyük Gözaltı, as its name suggests, creates a broad discussion about the arsenal of surveillance techniques and the way surveillance operates in culture. In addition to giving voice to a man under repression and in fear, the narration humorously critiques the imprisoned male, especially touching on his anxieties about being masculine enough under attack or in a near-death situation. In the novel, the elements of physical brutality and torture are reflected in the fantasies of the protagonist, rather than his acute experiences. Still, they powerfully communicate the pain of being subjected to oppression and violence. The emotional paralysis of the protagonist and his innate need to beg for his life when faced with death draws an honest picture of a man who fails to be a hero.

By limiting the critical interpretations of this novel solely to the struggles of political prisoners during the military rule of March 12 causes *Büyük Gözaltı* to be appreciated in only one dimension. The novel, in my opinion, draws a retrospective history of an individual’s attempts toward becoming and staying masculine, inherent to the prison narrative. The strong pyramidal hierarchy of the Turkish society, where oppression and violence help the layers of the pyramid maintain their places, is dramatically shown by the patriarchal power dynamics that govern the social relations. This dimension of the novel shows how submission to superior powers, whether in familial or educational realms causes disturbances, and how being imprisoned makes a man feel less manly. Being manly embraces the state of rebellion to domination, but in the long run it also embraces the pleasure of death, which ostensibly has non-manly implications. This superposition is the linchpin of *Büyük Gözaltı*. The precariousness of being in the gray area between the manly-man and the non-manly serves as a culmination point in the novel.

Büyük Gözaltı posits a world with numerous metaphorical prisons. It replaces the conjugal with the custodial. The life as a prison metaphor in the novel is trans-historical and indicates that Turkish society was an authoritarian surveillance society, which employed fractured forms of a massive social surveillance and attempted to keep the individual under control even before the military periods.

In its linking of parents watching over children and teachers watching over students, to guards watching over prisoners, the novel suggests that when the anticommunist military-state assumed the role of an authoritarian power, it was in fact depending on individuals' loyalty to the norms and values that settle at the very center of the society. The novel may be positioned in the domain of realpolitik with supportive arguments outside the text, but the war for power that *Büyük Gözaltı* aims to criticize is definitely not limited to the political boasting of the events of March 12.

The memories of the protagonist, in my view, show how the strictures of becoming a man are connected to the issues of hegemony and domination. The plot, comprised of memories, indicates how the paternal form of patriarchy produces a form of domination exercised between men. In this sense, it is not coincidental that *Büyük Gözaltı* repeatedly makes references to a masquerade of masculinity. It compellingly shows that masculine toughness is built on role-playing and pretending. The novel illustrates how a man under domination, maltreatment, and pressure marshals tropes of masculinity. The protagonist poses a challenge not only to the paternalistic authority exercising power over his individuality, but also to the general rules of the society. He is resistant to society's laws and norms, and tries to free himself from the constraints of the law of the father, where his aggressive mother, maternal grandfather, and teacher embody the throne of the father, respectively. This makes it possible to see *Büyük Gözaltı* not only as a painful representation of a man in a culture overdetermined by a rigid patriarchal tradition, but also as a condemnation of that culture and its destructive effects. When placed next to the esteemed political rebellion narrated in the novel, this cultural rebellion may seem less important to some, but it is, after all, what provides the keys to understanding the dynamics of admiration felt for power in a country with a rich history of military interventions.

MASCULINITY AS A NATIONAL PREOCCUPATION: TORTURE AND EMASCULIZATION IN ERDAL ÖZ'S *YARALISIN*

Yaralısın is an attempt to open people's eyes to some great miscarriages of justice during the coup d'état. It has several highly disturbing scenes of torture, both sexual and nonsexual. The novel is a ret-

respective self-judgment of a leftist revolutionary intellectual, and it reveals how violent power becomes an indispensable tool for men to define themselves, even when they are victims of it.³⁸ This novel is one of the primary examples of prison literature in Turkey, and a pioneering example that explores masculinity experienced as a prisoner. In addition to men suffering at the hands of the military junta, *Yaralısin* conveys men who are imprisoned by their masculine roles, alluding to a prison of masculinity. Erdal Öz builds on the concept of hegemonic masculinity as a negative identity, in line with Nancy Chodorow's formulation, who argues that a boy's masculinity is constructed in opposition to his mother and thus women in general.³⁹ The novel does not go back in time to comment on the gender in the formative years of its protagonist, but it questions the simplified binary of gender relations following the dramatic transformation of the protagonist under torture and in prison. In *Yaralısin*, father-state is the role model for boys, and it defines the masculinity of the son-citizen. As one of the leading examples of protest novels that resist the official historical narrative of March 12, *Yaralısin* questions whether the seizure of power by the military is an attempt to put the country back on a peaceful track using the gender dimension as a key to opening the doors to more complex questions.

Yaralısin stems from real-life experiences of Erdal Öz, who was among the pioneering intellectuals that experienced the intimidating measures of the military rule.⁴⁰ It also borrows from the prison diaries of the famous student leader Deniz Gezmiş and his friends, who were sentenced to the death penalty in 1972. The novel reveals the ill treatment of political prisoners with striking details and successfully attains the realism effect of a documentary. It does not attempt to make a great impression on the reader stylistically, but the raw power of its lines, which speak of the extremity of March 12 experiences, causes *Yaralısin* to have a sensational impact. In *Yaralısin*, Öz chronicles the violent harassment of an anonymous individual during

38 Erdal Öz, *Yaralısin* (Istanbul: Can Yayınları, 1999).

39 Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

40 After being serialized in the daily *Cumhuriyet* in 1973, *Yaralısin* was published as a book in 1974. In 1975, it received the Orhan Kemal Novel Award and later in 1980s, its translations were published in the Netherlands (Ambo 1988), Germany, Hungary, Syria, and Macedonia.

the interregnum. The novel addresses the state officials who display a hatred for a variety of religious, political, and sexual parties. Their aggressiveness constitutes the terrorized ground where revolutionary utopias and the quest for justice are discussed. This dialogue subsumes the questioning of masculinity since the terror is built on beatings, torture, and sodomization. As an individual who rejects and resists the dominant state ideology, the protagonist becomes a target and experiences a violent interpellation. This brutal education, which casts a helpless individual turned into a victim under the pressures of the powerful regime, constitutes the backbone of the novel.

The novel does not only lean on documentary accounts of the junta's interrogation methods. After chronicling the organized brutality, torture, and the great emotional cost one pays, *Yaralısin* also casts a critical eye on the dynamics of power relations in groups consisting of victimized males, thus making the strong sense of community and solidarity among the prisoners a primary focus of attention in the novel. The protagonist discovers that violence and hunger for power are essential to those individuals who were pushed into a subaltern position by the repressive measures of the state, after he is sent to prison following a clandestine interrogation. Hence with the prison dimension, the power problematic becomes divorced from the military/civil dichotomy and settles into a broader discussion of masculinity. As with Altan, Öz invites a comparison of masculinities and an exploration of men's attachment to power, regardless of the military-civil dichotomy. *Yaralısin* reveals how psychological relatedness and the sense of connectedness it assumes cause males to identify with other males, and how the lack of it produces a sense of isolation and alienation. Homosocial connections have the leading role in this novel and it is this questioning of collective masculinity that makes *Yaralısin* an important center of gravity in this book.

The novel is set during the first twenty-four hours of the protagonist's imprisonment; he is the only political detainee in a cell full of criminals. It begins with an interior monologue in which the protagonist provides snapshot images of the old, dirty, and overcrowded cell, and describes his failure to subscribe to these conditions and his cellmates. The narration covers the arrest and interrogation of the protagonist in flashbacks. It juxtaposes horrific images of torture and humiliation against an intransigent optimism. With such a backstage, the novel asks if the violent versions of hegemonic masculinity, which

are symbolized by the agents of the military-state and ordinary prisoners, could have been challenged by the moral fortitude of another type of masculinity, which is symbolized by the protagonist Nuri, who is a leftist, revolutionary intellectual. In this sense, the novel displays the political clash of the 1970s as a clash of masculinities, in which alternative masculinities were engaged in a battle for power as rivals. Nuri's prison life brings an additional dimension of struggle experienced among physically and intellectually different, yet similarly power-hungry masculinities. *Yaralısin* suggests that the will for power and control can be observed in a number of mediums, whether civil, institutional, or militaristic.

Critics in Turkey did not recognize this view of the novel. On the book jacket of his famous short story collection, *Kanayan* (Bleeding), Erdal Öz complains about the criticisms of *Yaralısin*, which take the reactionary political stance of the novel at face value:

Both *Bleeding* and *You Are Wounded* were among the first books of the March 12 incident. Both of my books received much criticism. Unfortunately, all of the compliments and the negative criticism were from a perspective of contemporaneity and politics. It is overlooked that both of my books were works of literature rather than contemporary political writings. I had, however, aimed—even if my books were to be translated and read in different corners of the world—to cause humane and artistic quakes in the hearts of the readers.⁴¹

Previous interpretations of the novel have prioritized the oppositional and anti-militaristic political accent of it, and labeled *Yaralısin* as a documentary of torture and a requiem for the collapse of revolutionary utopias.⁴²

41 “*Kanayan* da, *Yaralısin* da 12 Mart’ta olmuş kitaplar arasında ilk yayımlananlardı. Her iki kitabım da pek çok eleştiri aldı. Ne yazık ki yapılan bütün övgüler de, bütün yergiler de güncellik açısından ve politik yönden yapıldı. Her iki kitabımın da, güncel ve politik birer yazı değil de, birer edebiyat yapıtı oluşları gözlerden kaçtı. Oysa ben bu kitaplarımda, diyelim çevirilip dünyanın bir başka ucunda bile okunsa, okuyanın yüreğinde insancıl ve sanatsal sarsıntılar yaratabilmeyi de amaçlamıştım.”

42 Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış III* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994), 14; Murat Belge, *Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1998), 130–34.

Torture and incarceration plots in *Yaralısin* invite an interesting discussion on masculinity. Moving from Turkey as a symbolic prison to the real settings of a prison cell, the novel deals with masculinities produced by and in the concept of crime. Öz offers a dramatic exploration of power and dominance, alluding to several theoretical discussions on prison, and using domination as a tool to reach an understanding of men and masculinities.⁴³ It is a pertinent question in masculinity studies, as stated in one of the pioneering studies of the field by Carrigan, Connell, and Lee, to determine how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance.⁴⁴ *Yaralısin* explores this question in the micro-cosmos of a prison cell, and the protagonist Nuri discovers through his prison experience that his intellectual resistance as a leftist revolutionary is an unfamiliar concept for ordinary men. He recognizes that his ideology is confined to a metaphysical space in a culture that appreciates violence and the use of physical power as the real problem solvers.

The two central male role binaries, Nuri versus the policemen who took him into custody and Nuri versus the regular prisoners, all named Nuri by the protagonist, represent opposing political registers and conflicting class identities as well as contrasting masculinities, the clash of which I argue is central in *Yaralısin*. The novel opens to an oppressive atmosphere of a fierce blacklisting, frequent police-raids and house-searches. A middle-aged leftist intellectual appears in a fearful state of paranoia, waiting for his turn in the communist-hunt. Under the emotional burden of the defeat of the revolutionary movement, he is already in a terrorized and victimized position. Captivated by fear, he tries to classify his books, to separate the dangerous ones and burn them. The novel does not mention the protagonist's political history at all, but with the forbidden literature in his library and his fearful state of waiting, it is hinted that he is somehow related to the revolutionary movement. While some literary critics argue that the lack of such a history decreases the credibility of the novel, I believe that the lack of such a political history paves the way for

43 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1977).

44 Tim Carrigan, Rob Connell, John Lee, "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity," in *The Masculinity Studies Reader*, eds. Rachel Adams and David Savran (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 112.

the feeling of absolute triviality, which is the novel's aim.⁴⁵ The protagonist is meant to be an ordinary face in the crowd, maybe just a sympathizer of the leftist movement, so that the absolute power of state in *Yaralısin* can be communicated through an aura of submissiveness that surrounds every individual during the military rule.

The direct address of the protagonist of himself via the second-person "you" throughout the novel, such as *you are the newcomer, you feel surprised, you looked around*, interpellates the reader.⁴⁶ The reader faces an "irreducible oscillation" between the intimate voice of a "first-person" narration limited in the breadth of knowledge it can access, and the distant, omniscient voice of a "third-person" narration, simultaneously inviting and precluding identification with other pronominal voices.⁴⁷ The novel catches a dramatic cathexis with the engagement suggested by this interplay. It causes readers to situate themselves as the active participants of incidents, rather than as sole observers of them. In the course of the novel, as the protagonist thinks back on his terrible experiences, it becomes clear that the second-person address can also be a result of the splitting of the protagonist's self, a futile exercise for him to ascribe his memories to somebody else. By refusing to provide the reader with the name of the protagonist until the end of the novel, Öz emphasizes the fact that the protagonist can be defined by his trivial existence. He is just an anonymous individual, who could have been anybody. He can be replaced by anyone reading the novel. As an individual acted upon and dominated, the protagonist surfaces as an icon, symbolizing the deprivation of power that many individuals had to encounter in the 1970s.

The visible accent of his pre-given powerlessness makes a fearful and emasculated subject out of the protagonist, even before the knock on his door by the police officers. The undercover officers, who suddenly appear at his doorway, stage a complete opposition to this passivity. They are men of action, exemplary figures of fearless men of deeds, what David Gilmore suggests to be fundamental to the cate-

45 Murat Belge argues that the lack of information about the political past of the protagonist introduces a Kafkaesque atmosphere to the narration. Murat Belge, *Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1998), 131.

46 Erdal Öz, *Yaralısin* (Istanbul: Can Yayınları, 1999), 16; 61; 100.

47 Brian Richardson, "The Poetics and Politics of Second Person Narrative," *Genre* 24, no. 3 (1991): 313.

gory of real man in Mediterranean cultures.⁴⁸ From the first instance of his being taken into custody in his home, to the moments of his getting transported to a secret building for interrogation, the protagonist encounters tormenting and intimidating behaviors that bruise his self-esteem and position him as a powerless victim, a fragile and obedient subaltern subject. The officers break into his house, repeatedly harass him, destroy his library and possessions, and threaten him with violence. The police appear as authoritarian figures, who present aggression and destructive male power. To the protagonist, they are everything he is not: courageous, forceful, commanding, and totally in control.

The state in *Yaralısin* symbolically subsumes the disciplinary anger of a father and carries the accent of aggressive and authoritarian masculinity. The sovereignty of the policemen associates them in a single masculine body of power (an extension to the paternalistic masculinity of the father state), adorned with characteristics of violent, hegemonic masculinity. In this specific model of masculinity, aggressiveness and violence surface as prominent characteristics among a collection of intolerant attitudes and a rigid way of thinking. In the construction of the unitary power of the policemen, a discriminative vocabulary, which demonizes and alienates the leftist persona, plays the major role. It is expressed that the protagonist is a threatening other for the policemen from the very beginning, not only on political grounds for his revolutionary leftism, but also on a scale of masculinity. The intimidating accounts of the violent search of the protagonist's library and his being taken away for interrogation are accompanied by an emasculating addressing of him with nicknames such as my fair (*güzelim*),⁴⁹ and rebukes for his not being able to fulfill the given orders quickly and befittingly, as a real man would be expected to do.⁵⁰ Sexism exercised by the policemen defines the first rule toward being an acceptable man as not being a sissy. The silent observations of the protagonist during the show of the arrogance and abusive masculinity of the policemen in his home mark him as an outsider. His fastidious eyes detect some details about the lack of hygiene of the policemen. While they push him from one room to

48 David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 41.

49 Öz, *Yaralısin*, 23.

50 Ibid., 47.

another, the protagonist feels sickened by the sharp smell of sweat of the man that acts as the leader of the group and also catches a big stain of oil on his suit:

He came and stood right in front of you. Whiteness passed over his blonde face. He may have ground his teeth as well. He stretched out his hand. His other hand was crooked to his back. You thought he will hit, avoided your face; but he did not hit. He caught your chin and gripped it in his palm. A sharp smell of sweat, a smell of animal shed settled on your nose. [...] He was in front of you. There was a wide stain of oil on the right leg of his trousers. The heavy smell of sweat spread by his body was overwhelming you.⁵¹

These material details of dirt appear repeatedly in the novel to emphasize the animal-like primordial condition of the perpetrators of tyranny. As the story develops, details of dirt also become visible in passages narrating people being tortured to death and sharing the inhumane conditions of the penitentiary. While the dirt of the people being tortured and jailed carry an accent of triviality, the dirt of policemen gains and holds symbolic meanings that signify their animality, characterized by a lack of hygiene, a violent and unreasonable hatred, and a lack of pity.

Dirt is an essential metaphor for the monstrous humanity and the underdeveloped state of mind of the policemen in the vision of the protagonist. His immediate recognition of the lack of hygiene initiates a connection between Nuri and some previous controversial icons of modernism in Turkish novels, such as the veteran in the prominent Kemalist novelist Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's *Yaban* (The Outlander, 1922). Also, the reader senses the effeminate characteristics projected onto him, where just like a woman, overwhelming attention is paid to physical appearance and cosmetic details, in opposition to the conventions of the manly values represented by the

51 "Geldi tam önünde durdu. Sarışın yüzünde bir beyazlık indi çıktı. Dışlerini de gıcırdatmış olabilir. Elini uzattı. Öbür eli arkasındaydı. Vuracak sandın, sakındın yüzünü; vurmadı. Çeneni yakaladı, avcunun içinde sıkı. Ağır ter kokusu, bir ahır kokusu burnuna geldi oturdu. [...] Önündeydi. Pantolonunun sağ bacağında yaygın bir yağ lekesi vardı. Gövdesinden yayılan ağır ter kokusu burnunu eziyordu." Öz, *Yaralısn*, 23–24.

policemen.⁵² In these illustrations, aggressive power and lack of hygiene show the police officers as sturdy and masculinized, while the protagonist is gendered as inferior and feminized. Such sexism, as behavioral psychologist Robert Brannon summarizes, is the *ground zero* for the construction of masculinity.⁵³

The male sex role, Brannon adds, requires an aura of aggression. The tone of aggressiveness of the policemen in *Yaralısin* increases as the protagonist is taken away to a secret compound. The oppressive manly power of the policemen triggers a disciplinary self-inspection, a disturbing self-examination, which constructs a mechanism of internalized surveillance and causes the protagonist to attempt to discipline and reorganize himself to resist the pressures.⁵⁴ The protagonist attempts to avoid certain behavioral patterns produced by fear and sentimentality, and tries to keep his erect posture and act strong in an effort to restore his masculine identity.⁵⁵

As the protagonist's crisis of masculinity culminates, he becomes his own overseer. Besides all the maltreatment, it is torture what makes this crisis reach a climax. The protagonist resists betraying his friends and providing his interrogators with any names, which causes the aggressiveness of the policemen to reach a new level of intensity and give way to a chain of bloodthirsty tormenting acts. Since the conflict between the protagonist and the policemen is mainly staged as a political one, the aggression of the policemen seems, at first, to be connected primarily with political factors. Yet, in the course of the clandestine interrogation, their hatred targets sexual and religious iden-

52 The intersection of hygiene with modernity and a civilized self is familiar from as far back as prominent Kemalist novelist Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's *Yaban* (The Outlander, 1922), which focuses on the struggles of a veteran and narrates the attempt to establish an intellectual climate in a small Anatolian village against the less educated, underdeveloped and disturbingly dirty masses. His irritation due to bad smell and dirt marks the protagonist of *Yaralısin* as an outlander, similar to the Kemalist intellectual of the novel *Yaban*, who, within an authoritarian top-to-bottom attempt to modernize the nation, tried to resolve the ties of tradition and overcome the animalistic "backwardness" of the rural masses. *Yaralısin* contains similar animal images that haunt *Yaban*.

53 Robert Brannon, "The Male Sex Role and What It's Done for Us Lately," in *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority: The Male Sex Role*, eds. Robert Brannon and Deborah David (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1976), 1–40.

54 Jonathan Rutherford, *Men's Silences: Predicaments of Masculinity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 12.

55 Stephen Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), 165.

ties as well. The guards assault him not only by treating him less manly, but also by intimidating him with questions about his religious sect and the five pillars of Islam:

“Are you not Muslim?”

“I am Muslim.”

“Say thank God!”

“Thank God.”

“How many common rules of Islam are there?”

“Five.”

“Explain!”

“You explain, in a cold and shivering voice.” [...]

“Are you a Kızılbaş?”

“No, I am not.”

“What did you say?”

“No, I am not a Kızılbaş.” This time he does not hit.⁵⁶

Under custody, the body of the protagonist becomes the exemplary site of subversiveness for the policemen.⁵⁷ Torture does not manifest itself in the novel only as a method to gain information but also becomes salient as a ceremonial tool to annihilate its objects physically, intellectually, and mentally. It appears in the novel as a

56 “—Müslüman değil misin len?

—Müslümanım.

—Elhamdülillah de!

—Elhamdülillah.

—İslamın şartı kaç?

—Beş.

—Say!

—Sayıyorsun, soğuk, titreyen sesinle. [...]

—Kızılbaş mısın yoksa len?

—Değilim.

—Ne dedin?

—Kızılbaş değilim. Vurmuyor bu kez.” Öz, *Yaralısun*, 165–66.

57 Kızılbaş is the name given to the nomadic counterparts of the Bektaşî order in the Ottoman documents of the fifteenth century, because of their red head-dresses. Here it refers to the heterodox Alevite identity, a religious community that constitutes almost twenty percent of the population in Turkey. The nature of Alevi faith and practices varies, but in all versions, a philosophy of universal humanism remains. Alevites constitute a politically conscious community and in the 1970s, most of their young members were active in the left-

vital part of the performance of power and masculinity, which pierces the protagonist's body through physical punishment, and bruises his soul even more violently.

Yaralısin successfully portrays a dramatic questioning of the notion of strength, by positioning the silence of the protagonist against the violent behavior of the policemen. During times of torture, the protagonist remains a passive subject in his painful resistance. He is emasculated by the intimidating manners of the guards that swear at him with an exaggerated masculine vocabulary, using offensive words such as bugger (ibne) and son of a bitch (orospu çocuğu), to assert their masculine potency against their less manly prisoner.⁵⁸ No matter how savagely he gets destroyed, the protagonist gains heroic overtones with his dedication to silence. Although he considers it to be a primordial thought, he cannot help repeating to himself that screaming his agony will make him seem less manly, and so he tries to endure the pain.⁵⁹ Having been beaten on the soles of the feet with a stick for days and not uttering a word, he then becomes subjected to a more sophisticated version of torture, conducted by electric prods connected to his body and, specifically, his penis. The harassment inflicted on him eventually turns out to be an ordeal testing the limits of his self-image, against the feminizing threat of castration.

The male monopoly of power finds its utmost expression in this brutal test. With the irresistible pain it introduces, the attempt at castration makes the protagonist feel a complete loss of power. It reveals his hidden anxieties: a fear of not being a real man again strikes forcefully. The act of castration itself and the fear of the protagonist of being castrated, emphasizes virility as the essence of masculinity, a feature through which real men distinguish themselves and are distinguished from other men. While the contrast between his torturers' strong and erect posture and his collapsed body symbolize an already-lost war of virility, the protagonist happily discovers in a childish enthusiasm after the session of interrogation that the torturers could not succeed in turning him into an impotent man:

ist revolutionary movement. See Irene Melikoff, "Bektashi/Kızılbaş: Historical Bipartition and Its Consequences," in *Alevi Identity: Cultural, Religious and Social Perspectives* (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 1998); Joost Jongeren and Paul White, *Turkey's Alevi Enigma: A Comprehensive Overview* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003).

⁵⁸ Öz, *Yaralısin*, 130; 197.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 196–97.

You walk from one wall to the other in the depth of the cell. In concealment, you rub your penis. It grows, you move your hand up and down, short of breath. All of a sudden, amid an increasing heartbeat you hold on to the wall. You come. It hurts, burns inside, but you find yourself captivated by a childish enthusiasm, discovering that they did not succeed in castrating you. Your knees hardly carry you in this relief.⁶⁰

The question of virility is further dramatized in the novel by the protagonist becoming subjected to sexually-oriented torture in the following session, made by pushing and twisting a wooden stick into the rectum, which symbolically makes a passive homosexual out of him. This act of sodomization turns him directly into a sexual object of amusement and stigmatizes his shame.

When the interrogation finally ends, the protagonist, lying half dead and wallowing in his blood, recognizes an old woman entering the room in a mechanized manner with cleaning equipment, who turns a blind eye to him and disappears without a word after sweeping and wiping the floor.⁶¹ He watches her, while she cleans up his blood, picks up pieces of his torn clothes, and leaves the room, trying to prevent the spilling of drops of blood from the clothes onto the recently wiped floor, by putting one of her hands under the lump of filthy clothes. The attentiveness of the cleaning lady to the wiped floor and her inattentiveness to the tortured body of the protagonist points to the moral dissoluteness that torture propagates. The cleaning lady's ignorance makes the protagonist lose all his integrity and break down both physically and mentally.⁶² Glancing at his wound-

60 "Karşılıklı iki duvar arasında gidip geliyorsun boyuna. Belli etmemeye çalışarak bir elinle kamışını ovuyorsun. Büyüyor, soluk soluğa bir aşağı bir yukarı kaydırıyorsun elini. Birden. Yüreğinin hızlanan patırtıları arasında duvara tutunuyorsun. İşin boşalıyor. Acı veriyor, yanıyor içi, ama iğdiş edemediklerini anlayınca çocukça bir sevince kapılıyorsun. Dizlerin bu rahatlama içinde daha da güç taşıyor seni." Öz, *Yaralısın*, 167.

61 Ibid., 207–208.

62 As one of the few female figures of the novel (in addition to the woman that the protagonist is asked about during interrogation and the typewriter girl present in his trial), the cleaning lady symbolizes the reinforcement that the military and violent versions of masculinity are obtained from women. Her ignorance of the protagonist's tortured body indicates how women carry the burden in the production of social codes and discourses related to masculinity and military, although they are excluded from both sides.

ed body, the protagonist feels disintegrated, yet he wishes not to heal at all, in order not to be destroyed from the very beginning.⁶³

It is with his rape that the suffering body is gendered the most, and the loss of masculinity is suggested in its most definite manner. The protagonist's resistance dissolves completely after this brute attack, and he passes out. The torture plot, as a whole, communicates devastating pain, caused by gratuitous brutality and violence. It also dramatically punctuates the hierarchy of masculinity that the policemen seemed to maintain. The scenes of sexually-oriented torture indicate a tormenting emasculation and also depict how the protagonist passes through castration anxiety to a deeper existential confrontation with oblivion and nothingness, in which existence seems futile. He loses track of time and cries for the first time.⁶⁴ The dirt he is pushed into, the blood, the shit, and vomit he has to endure represents the inequity of power staged in the torture room dramatically, building the terror on the protagonist's previously quoted dislike of dirt. Once feeling uneasy due to the smell of sweat of other people, he now finds himself in a more disgusting situation, surrounded by primordially dirty conditions.

By showing oppressive methods meticulously, Öz conducts a terrorizing and paralyzing narration of torture. The tortured body certainly provides a nexus for the political investigation of the 1970 coup. I by no means overlook the sentient fact that this novel is, on one level, about physical torture. Still, I argue that, with the prison plot, the text carries the unspeakable and tormenting accounts of the protagonist's pain further, into a discussion of the masculine hunger for power. It is notable that through the prison plot, the novel shifts to an ethnography and delineates different masculinities from the eyes of its protagonist. As he experiences a twenty-four-hour period in a crowded prison cell, it becomes clear that the protagonist is placed in a position of inferiority and made an other not only by militaristic agents of the state, but also by ordinary people.

The protagonist goes to prison as the victimized and alienated actor of a violent spectacle: a man who cannot walk, sit, or lay properly in the absolute reality of enormous physical pain. The reiteration of the moments of torture insistently intrudes on his thoughts.

63 *Ibid.*, 238.

64 *Ibid.*, 242.

Shame, mistrust, anxiety, and insomnia mark his very first moments in prison. He is alienated and angry, apart from being politically and socially impotent. Eschewing the details that would link the narration to the historical facts of the coup d'état, *Yaralısin* dramatically chronicles the dynamics of prison life, which shapes the demeanor of its chief subject. Positioned at the lowest rank of the prison hierarchy as a newcomer, the protagonist finds himself hostage to another fierce monopoly of power. The head of the cell gives orders to him, assuming the power of the guardians. Observing his overwhelming attempts to look down on the others, the protagonist starts to discover the power dynamics of the confined space.

Captivated in a traumatic loss of agency, he characterizes himself with a lack of pride and dignity in his first moments in the cell. He considers himself in a tormenting metamorphosis, turning, in a Kafkaesque manner, into a bug to be stepped on: he likens himself to a desert bug exposed to sunlight with the sudden removal of a stone, which tries to find a hiding place (*ansızın kaldırılan taşın altından birden gün ışığına çıkan, gizlenecek kovuk arayan kaçak bir böcek*).⁶⁵ As time passes, he gets to know his cellmates one by one, with different stories of crime and detention on false grounds. Senior Nuri, the head of the cell, blonde Nuri, little Nuri, Nuri of Yozgat, Gılay Nuri, gentleman Nuri, Nuri the King, and rifle Nuri, all of whom are prisoners for non-political reasons, increase the protagonist's loneliness further, as they blatantly establish reservations against him.

Ordinary prisoners are men of regular crimes who maintain and manage an aggressive masculinity. They define what is normal in prison and, as Butler writes, this is not only to define the regular but it is also, following Foucault, a mode of discipline and surveillance within late modern forms of power.⁶⁶ The cell and its disciplinary rules of military spirit, the wake-up call, the roll call, the bedtime call, meal timings, and so on symbolize an alien form of life for the protagonist. The prison plot of *Yaralısin* enhances the potentially radical political energy of the interrogation plot. Once again, the masculinity of the protagonist becomes a dramatic question, since he fails to be like the others, figures of conventional masculinity. He replies

⁶⁵ Ibid., 15.

⁶⁶ Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 55.

to the good night call with a thankful, quiet, and gentle good night, while the crowd altogether screams a loud and well-disciplined Thanks! (Sağol!), and go to their beds making fun of him.⁶⁷ His concerns about not making noise during his first night also appear as a version of feminine interest. The door to the toilets, to which he pays careful attention to open and close without making noise at night, becomes another symbol of his alien position.⁶⁸ Excessive politeness topples over into effeminate foppiness and makes Nuri a marginal figure.⁶⁹ Toward the end of the novel, when he becomes accustomed to the cell, he shuts the door like the others, even at night, ignoring the disturbing sound it makes in the silence of the cell.⁷⁰

A sudden fight takes place in front of the eyes of the protagonist immediately after his entrance to the cell, while he was waiting to be guided to his bed. Kıdemli (senior Nuri, head of the cell) initiates a fight with Yozgatlı (Nuri of Yozgat).⁷¹ The reason for this fight becomes clear shortly after another newcomer arrives late that day and Kıdemli slaps him in the face for not answering his questions quick and loud.⁷² When he learns that this is a ritualistic greeting for newcomers, the protagonist wonders why he himself missed it. Gilay Nuri makes him recognize that senior Nuri initiated that fight with Nuri of Yozgat to show the protagonist his power as the head of the cell and make him accept his authority. He tells him that he was not hit by senior Nuri due to his being a political prisoner.⁷³ Similar to the police officers, the cellmates appear to be individuals, who associate masculine virility with physical power rather than intellect. They do not show a nationalistic jingoism similar to the policemen but embrace a macho posturing in line with theirs. They are vivid examples of how the idea of the tough guy is embraced as the authentic definition of masculinity.

Öz directs our attention to the false categories of masculinity and femininity as determined by binary thinking: he shows that a domi-

67 Öz, *Yaralısn*, 30.

68 Ibid., 58.

69 Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 148–52.

70 Öz, *Yaralısn*, 266.

71 Ibid., 26.

72 Ibid., 173.

73 Ibid., 175.

nation/subordination relationship can just as quickly be established among men, regardless of their ideological resistance to an authoritarian regime. In prison, his cellmates came to be the marker against which the protagonist gets measured. They shun him as a political prisoner but also as a man at a different level. Gilay Nuri, who says he is named after the legendary boxer Muhammed Ali Clay, positions regular crimes like burglary, homicide, and other violent acts in a masculine domain, while leaving the protagonist and his political resistance to the system out, and in the fringes. It is not coincidental that he is the one who intimidates the protagonist due to the fragility of his body, exposing his athletic and tattooed figure, and asking him about his wounds.⁷⁴ The equation of athleticism, masculinity, and normality symbolized by Gilay and Gilay's diversification of the protagonist from the masculinity represented by the crowd, positions the masculinity of the protagonist against the tough, muscular and athletic alternative. By refusing to talk about his wounds, the protagonist attempts to show that he is tough and adult enough to handle his pain. Meanwhile, he also questions himself and attempts to rationalize his earlier actions within political contexts.

Although his being a political prisoner is emphasized as a less manly situation, this pre-given difference gets challenged to some extent, as the protagonist learns more about his inmates and discovers their peculiar habits and idiosyncrasies. He learns that Nuri of Yozgat is in prison because of a false statement, just like rifle Nuri. It becomes clear that Gilay is the only one with a record of violence, but his blind love for his ex-wife Gül becomes the excuse in his story. As he becomes closer to his fellow inmates toward the end of the day, the protagonist secures access to the poetry diary of Blonde Nuri, which is being circulated within the cell. The childish rhymed phrases and the sentimental prose hidden in the notebook point to the fragility concealed behind the gestural system of manliness that is being staged by the tough cellmates. The poetry book raises the protagonist, for the first time in the novel, to a position of adult authority:

Pages adorned with drawings of flowers. [...] You read audibly:
Please pay a little attention/Do not make my notebook
dirty/The poems I wrote/Are my life in misery. With bigger

⁷⁴ Ibid., 88.

fonts underneath: “Written by Nuri” [...] You leave, grabbing under your arm, the notebook filled with elementary poems written by the rationale of a seven- or eight-year-old.⁷⁵

After reading the notebook, the protagonist grasps his intellectual superiority as an adult feature. However, he feels his adult authority immediately under threat of a physically violent masculinity as he hears the violent oaths of Nuri of Yozgat to chase down the owner of the false statement after his release from prison. Then rifle Nuri comes along with plans to kill the landlord that sent him there with a slander to take his wife away from him. Gılay exercises with his switchblade, how to best hurt his ex-wife Gül’s body, who abandoned him after he was imprisoned. These men make the protagonist feel truly alone in his intellectual elite world, pushed into the position of a child who is trying to understand the violence surrounding him.

Their hunger for power, their will to risk danger and death, and the joy they find in violence in the name of revenge, position his cellmates on a similar level with the agents of torture in the protagonist’s vision. He recognizes that their masculinities, too, mark him as an outsider. When the protagonist says he cannot sit like the others do because of his wounds and tries to find himself a comfortable position on the bed during a friendly chat, Gılay Nuri says that they are accustomed to sissies (*hanım evlatları*).⁷⁶ Gılay’s unfortunate remark quickly turns into an apology, as he leans on the feet of the protagonist to make himself comfortable on the bed. The protagonist screams in pain and Gılay realizes that Nuri’s lack of comfort was because of his wounds due torture:

You are trying to smile.

“Sorry, I didn’t know,” says Nuri. The poor guy doesn’t know how to react. Pain diminishes slowly. After some time Nuri says: I got it now. The rumors are true then. Wow! I now under-

75 “Sayfalar çiçekli süslerle çevrelenmiş. [...] Sesli okuyorsun: Lütfen biraz dikkat et/Kirlenmesin defterim/Yazdığım bu şiirler/Gamlı hayatım benim. Altında da kocaman bir yazıyla: ‘Bunu yazan Nuri’ [...] Yedi sekiz yaşlarda bir çocuk saflığı içinde yazılmış ilkel şiirlerle dolu defteri kolunun altına sıkıştırıp çıkıyorsun.” Ibid., 211–12.

76 Ibid., 247.

stood the wounds on your wrists as well. Nuri suddenly understands everything. Forget it, you say.⁷⁷

Gılay, who for a second feels sorry and gives up overlooking the protagonist, quickly restores his masculine voice and starts talking to him about his plans of stabbing his ex-wife Gül, after giving her the divorce she has been requesting for a long time. He mimics taking a knife out of his pocket and demonstrates an attack. When the protagonist reacts critically to his intentions, he stops him saying “we are real men, my friend!” (delikanlı adamız biz arkadaşım!).⁷⁸

Gılay’s escape to a collective discourse of “we” is worthy to note and exemplifies Butler’s argument that to a certain extent sexuality establishes us as outside of ourselves; we are motivated by an elsewhere whose full meaning and purpose we cannot definitively establish.⁷⁹ Gılay’s fear to be considered feminine by other men causes him to ignore the bruised body of the protagonist.⁸⁰ Just like the cleaning lady, who did her job without throwing a glance at the protagonist’s tortured body in the secret compound, Gılay hesitates to examine the body of his friend more closely and ask him more about the incidents. Gılay’s finding his violent revenge natural and accepting the protagonist’s wounded body as something ordinary, makes it clear that brute force and being subjected to it are trivial parts of the collective discourse of the tough guys. This simple account of the cultural construction of masculinity leaves the protagonist in the peripheries of the picture. Although he gets accustomed to his uncomfortable bed, to talk aloud, and slam the doors toward the end of his first twenty-four hours in prison (having become a little “Nurified”), it becomes evident with his reaction to the violent plans of his

77 “Gülmeye çalışıyorsun.

Kusura bakma, bilemedim diyor. Ne yapacağını bilemiyor zavalıcılık. Acı git-tikçe azalıyor. Neden sonra, çaktım arkadaşım, diyor. Demek kulağımıza ge-lenler doğruymuş. Vay be. Kollarındaki yaraları da çaktım. Nuri birdenbire her şeyi anlıyor. Boşver, diyorsun.” Ibid., 248.

78 Ibid., 247.

79 Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 15.

80 Gılay’s fear of male intimacy is an important dimension of his identity. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick notes potential continuities between the homosocial and the homosexual while drawing contours of male friendship. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 1–2.

cellmates that the protagonist of *Yaralısin* still has obstacles to conquer in accepting the violent version of masculinity and identifying with the fellow prisoners within such a masculine role.⁸¹

Considering the protagonist's desperate attempts to associate himself with the regular prisoners and his saying that his name is Nuri, some critics of the novel argue that the protagonist accepts his lost intellectual war in the end.⁸² Accepting that he should overcome his otherness, he decides to be like the majority and takes the name Nuri, a nickname, which he sarcastically assigned to the other prisoners on his first day at the penitentiary. It is important to note that an alternative reading is possible. When, at the end of the novel, the protagonist finally explains that his name is Nuri, it is not because he feels like one of his fellow prisoners or involuntarily accepts their sovereignty, but because his real name is Nuri and his assignment of this name to his cellmates was nothing but a desperate attempt to believe in the existence of some other people like him, at a time when his relationship to the outer world and his ability to talk were traumatized by torture.

The assignment of a single name to all of the prisoners by the protagonist seems, at first glance, as a symbolic unification of the outside forces by someone suffering from a severe post-torture trauma. Yet, considering his prolonged disgust of violence, I find it hard to believe that the protagonist gives up his values at the end of his first day in prison. It may be a better idea to consider the choice of assigning the name Nuri to the others as an attempt of the protagonist to restore his sense of being, by creating people like him, numerous *Nuris* who were pushed into some subaltern position in different contexts. This is what Nuri tries to do over the course of the day: he tries to identify himself with the others. Hiding the name of the protagonist until the end, the narration concludes with a crushing realization of the arbitrariness of life. It indicates that the repressive network of power creates scenarios in which individual selves are made irrelevant.

If the protagonist's saying his name was Nuri is taken as a final *coup de grace* of his victimization, rather than a sign of recuperation,

81 Öz, *Yaralısin*, 230.

82 Belge, *Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1998), 131; Ayhan Yalçınkaya, *Eğer'den Meğer'e: Ütopya Karşısında Türk Romanı* (Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, 2004), 274.

then the novel may be said to reinstate the violent masculine intent. Despite the struggle it stages against violent versions of masculinity, it is possible to argue that *Yaralısin* fails to challenge the existing hierarchical organization of masculinities, but rather symbolically confirms it along with the superiority of masculinism, since the victimized and helpless image of Nuri the revolutionary intellectual reproduces the eminence of such role models. Still, if one allows for the fact that Nuri keeps telling his story in a second-person narrative voice until the end of the novel, when he says that his name is Nuri, it becomes plausible to argue that *Yaralısin* makes an optimistic opening to a wounded, yet more peaceful future of coexistence of masculinities in the end, despite the powerful feeling of impotency symbolized with Nuri. Then, *Yaralısin*'s paralyzing delineation of torture moves away from the chronicle of a disastrous victimization and becomes the story of Nuri's efforts to stand on his dignity.

Yaralısin suggests a need for renewed gender roles as well as renewed political ones. The novel attempts to challenge the conventional norms of being a man, by an alternative version of masculinity, a subversive one in the mainstream sense, which, while rejecting the aggressive and violent forms of masculinity, still attempts to express itself in the masculine domain. It evinces suspicion about what society has declared natural for man. It confronts the reader with the dark side of the guardianship metaphor, which is often used to define the role of military and nationalistic agendas in Turkish politics, and also with the dark sides of prevailing masculinity. The novel elaborates how challenges to the authority of the father-state are pacified in line with the premises of aggressive masculinity. It shows how a specific type of male power became the governing power of the military state of March 12, and asks in between the lines, if this aggressive accent of governance may also be valued by those who reject the violent versions of masculinity or become subjected to its dominance.

Yaralısin identifies the military state of March 12 as an institution constructed upon the subordination of certain subjects in terms of their class origins, political engagements, and gender identities. With all the connotations of physical strength, emotional invulnerability, and courage, *Yaralısin* not only confronts those who assume the power in the March 12 atmosphere with their victims, but also casts a critical eye on how people organize themselves into hierarchies even in conditions when they all are victims to power. Although the violent

masculinity of state agents in the settings of the military coup settle at the center of the narration, it should not be overlooked that the novel targets a broader set of masculinities that transcend the military/civil divide. With numerous Nuris in a prison cell, *Yaralısin* suggests the coexistence of a set of individual personalities within the role of masculinity. Readopting a first-person voice in the end, the protagonist stages a plea for the approval of the existence of different masculinities and the right of people to be individuals in their own right, with all their peculiar characteristics and political worldviews.

MASCULINITY UNDER ESCALATING MILITARY BUREAUCRACY:
QUIXOTIC SACRIFICE IN M.C. ANDAY'S *İSA'NIN GÜNCEİ*

İsa'nın Güncesi is a remarkable allegorical representation of the political aura of 1970s Turkey.⁸³ It successfully depicts the maelstrom of March 12, in which a considerable number of people were filled with paranoia and a state of fear, questioning the illegitimate logic of incidents that victimized them to a heavy-handed militaristic bureaucracy. Anday makes use of the absurd as a tool to express the struggles of modern individuals under military rule.⁸⁴ The extraordinary appeal of *İsa'nın Güncesi* is that it suggests that the weak may be triumphant even as victims of constant surveillance, overwhelming pressure, and tactless domination. Masculinity in this novel offers a site both for a macho posture and a protest against the dominant, showing that men cannot escape gender norms. The novel opens as a realistic narration traced through the diary of a man nicknamed İsa, a Turkish synonym for Jesus, and evolves to a *mise en abyme*, in which it becomes increasingly difficult to determine what is real and what is not. İsa records the incidents surrounding his life and offers commentaries about the backstage of the events and the characteristics of the people around him.

Actual men, Susan Bordo says, are not timeless symbolic constructs, they are biologically, historically, and experientially embodied

83 An earlier version of this section was published under the title "The Quixotic Death: Sacrifice and Masculinity in Melih Cevdet Anday's The Diary of Jesus," *Journal of Turkish Literature* 4 (2007): 123–41.

84 Melih Cevdet Anday, *İsa'nın Güncesi* (Istanbul: Adam Yayınları, 1991).

beings; the singular, constant, transcendent rule of the phallus is continually challenged by this embodiment.⁸⁵ *İsa'nın Güncesi* focuses on an utterly dramatic construction of masculinity, punctuating Bordo's emphasis on biology, history, and experience, and chronicles the transformation of a man of induced freedom with no specific intentions and beset by erotic thoughts, into a rebellious individual.

Once a man henpecked by his wife at home and by his superiors at the office, İsa finds himself in pursuit of understanding the events in his life when he discovers himself as a toy to some unidentified superior powers in some bureaucratic compound. On the one hand, the novel deals with an individual's voluntary self-sacrifice of his agency in life, and on the other, it illustrates a symbolic sacrifice of an innocent figure, by agents of an unidentified power network. The illogicality in the novel underplays social norms, values, and conventions, and makes the reader wonder about the meaning of life, in a state where faith in oppositions like good and evil, and real and illusory are lost, and it is not possible to have the genuine information of the ultimate reality. The novel is rich in metaphors, obscure symbols, and uncanny and extraordinary events. As the story propagates, key existentialist themes such as freedom, choice, and responsibility also surface.

With the connotations of his name, İsa symbolizes a broad and universal account of victimization and suffering, and an unconventional state of maleness. As Colleen M. Conway states in her provocative book, *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity*, the gendered portrayal of Jesus gives important clues about the ideals of masculinity in the Greco-Roman society; Conway focuses on the transformation of the emasculating crucifixion of Jesus to an act of self-sacrifice which makes him willing to die for a cause, the mark of a real man, by the Pauline literature.⁸⁶ *İsa'nın Güncesi* likewise focuses on the paradoxical gender specificity of sacrifice in the abstract setting of a period of military dictatorship, and sarcastically deals with the male sacrificial position as a heroic role that culminates during periods of upheaval, trauma, or war, in which real men are expected to sacrifice themselves in the blink of an eye. It skillfully discuss-

85 Susan Bordo, "Reading the Male Body," in *The Male Body: Features, Destinies, Exposures*, ed. Laurence Goldstein (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 265.

86 Colleen M. Conway, *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco Roman Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

es the gendered nature of sacrificial thinking, and questions issues related to power, agency and control, by juxtaposing gender identities.

Based on the struggles of a white-collar worker in his workplace and private life, the novel develops the theme of an average man mistakenly having his ordinary life thrown upside-down. Combining surrealism with a suspenseful noir and psychological insecurity, Anday successfully depicts a middling man, who finds himself raging against a network of power. *İsa'nın Güncesi* also raises existentialist questions about the self and human agency, and alludes to the infinite versions of reality through the breakdown of communication between the characters. There is a skillful criticism of bureaucracy in the novel, as the founding myth and ideology of what is called "the state," in which the social and political conditions around the theme of authoritarianism are explored with a gender-conscious agenda. In this respect, *İsa'nın Güncesi* is not only a critique of the military period, but also an artistic analysis of submission to the powerful, and the existentialist question of connecting with other people.

In her *An Introduction to Patriarchal Existentialism*, Jeffner Allen claims that existentialism is based on the aggrandizement of male characteristics and superiority, and says that existentialism is, in principle, patriarchal existentialism.⁸⁷ Anday negotiates the value system of masculinity within patriarchal existentialism, showing how masculinity harms men in the first place. In the novel, nobody cares about İsa at all. His interrogators in the bureaucratic compound never wholeheartedly listen to him. They mistake famous fictional characters for real people, and attempt to situate them as cooperators in the absurd plot of the crime that they are trying to manufacture. In this havoc, İsa's wife struggles through an unidentified illness and two miscarriages, his stylist lover yearns melancholically for her sex-based relationship with İsa, and his brother-in-law continually attempts to interrupt some awkward moments of decision. All of them ignore the challenge İsa encounters against the unidentified powers, and their inattention makes him embrace his misery in the end.

In *İsa'nın Güncesi*, Anday shows that masculinity can be stripped away, and that it does not belong to men. In İsa's image, submission appears as a way of life; he takes orders not only from his superiors

⁸⁷ Jeffner Allen, "An Introduction to Patriarchal Existentialism," in *The Thinking Muse: Feminism and Modern French Philosophy*, eds. Jeffner Allen and Iris Marion Young (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 71–84, 78.

but also from his wife. The wife becomes the symbol for the threat of women appropriating masculine authority. Even when İsa gradually recognizes that he is becoming part of a bigger drama in his new job in the mysterious bureaucratic compound, he stays dedicated to his routines. Just like his work, İsa's personal life is also founded on routines. However, in his affair, İsa surprisingly attracts the image of macho.

İsa presents himself as a person who is coincidentally alive, and who believes life is something that takes place outside him.⁸⁸ He is an exemplar of a modern white-collar man, working in an office, doing feminine work and celebrating managerial authority, who refers to himself as a tiny screw (*küçük bir vida*) in a vast machine, and a man of no harm (*zararsız bir adam*). While his flaccid masculinity is defined by his job and lack of capital, İsa also exhibits certain symptoms of alienation. The opening passages of his diary characterize İsa as a docile man who embraces the trivial nature of his existence and his extreme isolation. He is presented as a flabby figure: statements such as "I cannot find a way other than accepting life as a series of coincidences" (*yaşamı bir rastlantılar dizisi saymaktan başka yol bulamıyorum*), "I am a silent person, a frugal man. I have never had great intentions" (*sessiz bir insanımdır, bana verilenle yetinirim, hiçbir büyük amacım olmadı*), "I see incidents as they are: coincidental and without a specific aim" (*olayları olduğu gibi görürüm, rastlantısal ve amaçsız*), and "life means to die every second" (*yaşam her an ölmek demektir*) are axioms, which illustrate İsa's introverted and passive character, and reiterate his engagement with an existentialist feeling of nothingness.⁸⁹

İsa's extreme isolation and his light, boring, and unskilled job emasculate him. His body is inescapably masculine, while his passive nature is purposefully feminine. More than masculine or feminine, he is always *both* masculine and feminine. This complexity alludes to the fact that it is hard to understand the subject of men or women in stable or abiding terms, as Judith Butler pointedly notes.⁹⁰ Throughout the narration, İsa often becomes abstracted from the incidents surrounding his life and functions as a screen onto which a discussion

⁸⁸ Anday, *İsa'nın Güncesi*, 9–10.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 9; 10; 15; 24.

⁹⁰ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 1.

of existentialist masculinity is projected. He emphasizes, every now and then, the absurdity of life and indicates that humans are the sum of dual negations like life and death. From the moment when he introduces himself as a man of conceit, who lacks a competitive ambition and ability to potentiate his own destiny, and feels patient in his routine, until the disturbance and finally the destruction of this routine, İsa pompously relates to the readers within a trivial and alienated view of life. His continuous state of impotence portrays İsa as a social eunuch drawn in isolation and fearful of making decisions or taking risks. İsa repeatedly argues in his writings that the process of perceiving and knowing the world is fundamentally limited by one's vision, and truth is what one makes out of the incidents surrounding his existence. He presents himself grimly as a man of others' command and control, who with an annihilated sense of importance, embraces the present moment as the only meaningful sequence of life.⁹¹

In the allegorical system of the novel, İsa's denial of agency and accepting himself as an object of other people's will stages a power crisis, a fatigue and dislike of masculine control and agency, which symbolically refers to an intellectual fatigue felt against the repressive politics of the military period. Anday creates an anti-hero, which negotiates the conventions of masculinity. İsa's struggle for agency is dramatized by the enigmatic job offer he receives, which initiates a series of unfathomable events. Following the sudden reappearance of the former manager in his workplace, an offer related to a new job appears for İsa, a moment of decision is suggested, and this positions İsa in the role of decision maker. But failing to make a quick decision, he gets stuck, and finds it easier to mimic his former manager. He follows him to the office of his boss for a farewell. The two exchange salutes, the right hand, palm down, brought to the right temple, leaving İsa puzzled about the military gestures.

İsa is a highly unreliable protagonist because of his chronic loss of hearing and playful nature. İsa's observations of some abnormal events are mystifying with their unreliability. Anday nurtures the tension of the story by not making it clear if the highly unreliable narrator is a radically alienated individual suffering from a psychological disorder like schizophrenia, or whether he is capable of recording the events correctly. Although İsa shows some hallmark symptoms

91 Anday, *İsa'nın Güncesi*, 19; 42.

associated with schizophrenia, like lack of personal agency, delusions of control, and thought withdrawal, and he also experiences his role in his actions as a supporting one, it is never explicitly stated in the novel that İsa can be characterized as a man of pathologies. The irony Anday creates from the eyes of the somehow problematic İsa, therefore, is an “unstable” irony, which Wayne Booth defines as an irony that does not attempt to restore the truth but rather radically undermines knowing itself.⁹²

His relationships with women insert İsa irrevocably in a position of potency and agency. In contrast to the vulnerable figure of İsa, his wife appears as an individual empowered at the expense of her passive male partner. Her behavior contributes to a feeling of disorientation in the conventional gender hierarchy that accepts men’s supremacy over women. İsa’s recollections of his routine in his diary show that he obeys his wife’s orders and counseling. We read how his wife arranges İsa’s wake-up time, his lunch, and leisure activities and insists that he should take some time out with his friends, in order to be a real man:

She had arranged my wake-up time in the mornings. To keep the routine going, she put an alarm clock next to the bed. I had to get up every day when the alarm clock buzzed, including the weekends. [...] On my way to the office, she was giving me my lunch packet. After lunch, in case the weather was fine, she was counseling that I should take a walk in the garden. [...] The time I should return home was also precise. But she was tolerant about that.

“What kind of behavior is that to come home back directly from work?” she used to say. A man meets a friend for a cup of tea, coffee; there should be things he wants to talk about.⁹³

92 Wayne Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 1–86.

93 “Sabahları yataktan kalkma saatlerimi ayarlamıştı. Bunun aksamaması için başucuma bir çalar saat koyardı. Tatil günleri de dahil olmak üzere, her gün saat çalınca yataktan fırlamak zorunda idim. [...] İşyerime giderken elime öğle yemeği paketimi verirdi. Öğle yemeğini yedikten sonra, hava güzelse, işyerimin bahçesinde dolaşmamı öğütlerdi [...] Akşamları eve gelmem gereken saat de belirli olurdu. Ama bu konuda hoşgörülü davranırdı. ‘Nedir o öyle, işten çıkar çıkmaz eve damlamak,’ derdi. ‘Erkek dediğin, bir arkadaş ile buluşup bir yerde çay, kahve içer; konuşacağı şeyler vardır.’” Anday, *İsa’nın Güncesi*, 58.

İsa's wife lectures him about being manly enough, and she treats İsa with utter contempt. She blames him for her not being able to conceive, although the doctors tell her that she is the one with problems.⁹⁴ Giving all authority over his life to a dominant woman, who will protect, guide, and nourish him, İsa nullifies his self and erases his personality.

In the figure of İsa, Anday brings to the fore the issue of the subjectivation of an individual, by the virtue of being subject to a regulatory practice, a critical position widely explored by Michel Foucault.⁹⁵ We witness how İsa's submission to the governing moral discourses summoned up by his wife involves behavioral modification and forms of subjectivation.⁹⁶ Given the episodes that deal with his relationship with his wife, İsa emerges as a man who craves discipline, a strict routine, and continuous ordering. His diary describes İsa as a man living under a superfluous surveillance. Orders dominate his most intimate moments with his wife as well. İsa mentions that his wife does not let him kiss her lips during sex, because she keeps uttering remarks to organize [his] actions, prevent [his] mistakes (*hareketlerimi düzenleyecek, yanlışlarımı önleyecek sözler*).⁹⁷ The drama of being hideously commanded in all of his actions by a higher authority dresses İsa with a certain degree of submissiveness, but when the commander-in-chief happens to be the wife, this also means an insult to his masculinity. There is, however, one extraordinary award that İsa gets in return: his wife nicknames him after Jesus Christ and attributes him the role of a heroic savior.

The quotidian details about their marriage indicate that İsa's wife is a suicidal woman, who lives in a deep depression. Her mood makes the narration oscillate between life and death, introducing to it some uncanny proportions. But İsa mentions his wife's situation lightly. It is clear that he just does not care. İsa notes that it was a moment of delirium which caused his wife to initiate a mystical link between Jesus Christ and him:

⁹⁴ Ibid., 131.

⁹⁵ Foucault's interest in the formation of subjectivity dates back to his earlier works. Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1977).

⁹⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality Vol. 2* (New York: Random House, 1990), 29.

⁹⁷ Anday, *İsa'nın Güncesi*, 61.

First let me say that my name is not İsa. My wife used this name first in a note she left for me on this door a short time ago. I don't know why, I couldn't learn, as I did not ask her. [...] In the past, I had found similar papers twice in the same place, when I entered the house. [...] But in the first one, the deadly farewell was not clear; if I'm not mistaken, it was saying shortly İsa, forget me. In the second one the writing became a bit longer: İsa, wouldn't my end come eventually? There is no need to prolong. Let's end it here and be relieved.⁹⁸

Hallowed by his wife, İsa starts turning himself into a figure of Jesus Christ for no apparent reason. He admits getting used to the name in no time and starting to find similarities between Jesus Christ and himself. The principal similarity he finds is the ability to tolerate.⁹⁹ This wisdom confirms and incontrovertibly consolidates İsa's non-domineering masculinity, which is tender and gentle, and positions him in a controversial state of agency. The figure of Jesus Christ summons up a masculine agency that is brave and heroic as well as tender and gentle. This paradox crystallizes as the key question of the novel, as İsa's encounters in life often leave him in torment, trying to make a synthesis of the two opposite masculinities. With the sacrificial act of Jesus Christ in its baggage, the type of masculinity screened on İsa gently consolidates as the controversial role of an ascetic, who sacrifices his self, and practices an abstention from life in denial of indulgence.

İsa's overpowering wife challenges the power distribution of the traditional masculine/feminine binary. As a domineering female figure that bosses her husband and repeatedly reminds him of his worthlessness, she offers a new way of thinking about the concepts of power and domination over gender. The mocking depiction of

98 Önce şunu söyleyeyim, benim adım İsa değildir. Karım ilk kez gene bu kapıya kısa bir süre önce astığı bir kağıtta kullandı bu adı, benim için. Nedenini bilmiyorum, kendisine sormadığım için de öğrenemedim. [...] Bundan önce iki akşam daha bulmuştum böyle bir kağıt, eve girer girmez, aynı yerde. [...] Ama o ilk kağıtta ölüm vedaı açık seçik değildi; yanlış hatırlamıyorsam, kısaca "İsa beni unut!" yazılı idi. İkincisinde biraz daha uzadı yazı: bir gün nasıl olsa sonum gelmeyecek miydi? Bunu uzatmanın hiç anlamı yok. "İsa burada bitsin kurtulalım." Anday, *İsa'nın Güncesi*, 66–67.

99 Ibid., 67–68.

İsa's wife as a witty, masculinized figure indicates that oppressive power is not essentially a masculine trait, although it has been concomitantly accepted as a prerogative of masculinity. The image of İsa's wife collapses the natural attribution of femininity to the female body and masculinity to the male body, and makes it clear that gender is a free-floating artifice radically independent of sex.¹⁰⁰

Although he surfaces in the initial passages of the novel as a man who embodies a less valued masculinity by virtue of being passive and performing an office job, İsa is not totally emasculated. He tries to prove himself potent by sleeping with multiple women, all physically alike and resembling his wife, which in his vision, deprives İsa of accusations of adultery.¹⁰¹ The protean nature of gender becomes clear when İsa surfaces as a totally different man in another relationship. As the memories of İsa's affair with his lover unfold, it becomes clear that they have been voyeuristically involved in an affair, after a series of gazing at one another's silhouettes through windows. The recollections of İsa's affair with his lover is framed by a set of rules quite the opposite of the one that defines his marriage. In his affair, it is İsa who decides what to do. He visits his lover's fashion atelier only when he feels like it and has quick intercourse with the young woman. The atelier surfaces as the bastion of İsa's hegemonic masculinity, where he becomes an aggressive and threatening "manly man."

Gender, *İsa'nın Güncesi* argues, is a matter of becoming. Exhausted by her blatant role as a sexual instrument of İsa's voyeuristic pleasures, his lover asks İsa to do certain things for her, but he simply ignores them. In the passages that record this affair, the emphasis is on İsa's physical pleasure. İsa comments on his lover's body and sexuality in a dispassionate manner, portraying her as a passive object of his desires and just another routine in his life. In his relationship with his lover, İsa appears as an egotistical male figure that exemplifies normative ideals of masculinity and sexuality. He chooses deeds over words, and avoids passivity and indecision.

While women characters serve as sex objects to satisfy İsa's desires, they also challenge the male superiority by humiliating its sexual potency. His wife blames İsa for her miscarriages; she calls him

100 Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 12.

101 Anday, *İsa'nın Güncesi*, 134.

a non-male.¹⁰² His lover blames him for getting stuck in the memories of their voyeuristic first gazes and forces İsa to return to the actual time.¹⁰³ İsa's wife and his lover mirror the reactions and values of İsa. They confirm who he is and articulate his different faces. Therefore, İsa's sexual relationships actually serve as keyholes through which his real character can be seen. Inspired by the legacy of the masculinity of Jesus Christ, the Janus-faced masculinity staged in the novel indicates that İsa is in fact characterized by a fusion of submissive and hegemonic characteristics. İsa is fragile, weak, and drawn to nihilism, but he is also pushy and vigorous when he feels it is necessary, which makes him a figure attractive to women.

As the story unfolds, İsa surfaces as a man contemptuous of his wife and lover, and it becomes clear that the only emotional truth or understanding is arrogated to himself. The bizarre crescendo of İsa's love affairs reaches a climax when we learn that he is also involved in a sexual relationship with his brother-in-law's wife. This affair mockingly provides a fresh look at another plot of dominance established over İsa, as it shows how İsa fools the agents of authority around him: the brother-in-law, who in the beginning of the novel happens to be a counselor to İsa and the decision maker of his life, gets transformed into a cuckold, a figure unaware of the incidents surrounding his own life, a victim in the chain of events governed by İsa. In the beginning, his brother-in-law seems to castrate his manliness by making İsa's decisions, it becomes clear that İsa in fact invalidates his agency by sleeping with his wife.

Charged with a dark sardonicism, his ambiguous affairs hint at unorthodoxy about İsa's submissiveness. İsa's obeying orders, but then writing about them in his diary with wry comments, alerts the reader to İsa's playfulness. But, it is only after İsa faces his interrogators in the mysterious building that the true nature of the victim position is revealed. The second sacrificial scenario of the novel elaborates the story of İsa's transformation from a man of hedonistic everydayness, dominated by cynicism and pleasure seeking, into a man who struggles for his freedom. This transformation elaborates İsa's turning into a figure of Jesus Christ, following a violent story of

102 Ibid., 131.

103 Ibid., 42.

scapegoating. Almost identical to a pagan blood sacrifice, a group of people chose İsa as a target and they single him out as a victim to some superior powers. İsa then subscribes to a chivalric fight to exculpate himself, where he confronts the chauvinistic masculinity of his sacrificers and attempts to challenge their rigid way of thinking. In this fight, İsa becomes a Camusian hero, who accepts the absurdity of life, yet resists getting lost in it. Similar to the mythological figure that Albert Camus's famous *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (The Myth of Sisyphus) owes its name, who was condemned to rolling a boulder up the side of a mountain to its summit by the gods, a boulder which will eventually roll down and reach its original position, İsa becomes a man captured in a vicious circle in the heart of bureaucracy. Camus suggests that Sisyphus can overcome the absurdity of his fate by choosing to face his struggle and pushing the rock despite its futility. İsa follows a similar path.

After İsa finds the documents hidden in the safe deposit box in his first days at his new office, his colleagues identify as a group in opposition to and dominant over him. İsa sees the papers left in the safe deposit box, but he is only aware of seeing them. He does not understand what is written on the papers and assumes the text is in some foreign language, but he fails to convince his interrogators that he is not able to read the papers he had found. From a harmless misunderstanding and a misdemeanor, the issue about the documents turns into an enigmatic unlawful act that puts İsa in a desperate search for potency.

The rigid way of thinking of the members of the institute is a metaphor for the conditions of the state power during the military period. Their stiff and unemotional attitudes vividly give the message that fascism is not human. As the managers of the mysterious institution settle in chauvinistic and hegemonic subject positions following the discovery of the documents, İsa attempts to subscribe to heroic suffering, which will reinstitute his masculinity. After his discovery, İsa is taken under strict surveillance by the authorities, and he starts making compulsory trips to the invisible levels of the building to be interrogated by several section managers, accompanied by a bizarre woman dressed in military uniform.¹⁰⁴ İsa fantasizes about the woman; he

104 Ibid., 88.

vigilantly inspects her body in the elevator and even gently touches her hips, but is surprised that the woman gives no response.¹⁰⁵ Cold and cruel, the androgynous woman in military uniform is only a minor character in the story, but she is emblematic of the author's intricate game with gender roles and the concept of performativity.

With such an inanimate image, the unidentified superior powers and the mysterious building get associated with the terrifying idea of death. It is expressed, explicitly for the first time in the novel, that the institute has a militaristic chain of command. The woman takes İsa to the upper levels of the building, where he becomes subjected to a preposterous interrogation:

Hunchback asked:

"Where did you find those papers?"

"Your honor," I said, "I was brought to my new room only yesterday." [...]

"Which new room?" he said. [...]

"The one on the fourth floor," I continued. "Yesterday, by noon. It was raining and I got wet while passing through the garden." What irrelevant words!

Hunchback asked: "Which garden?" I made a wave of my hand trying to show the next building. [...]

Hunchback said: "Yes?"

"Yes," I said. "I sat in the office until the evening. This morning upon my arrival, I opened the safe deposit box." Hunchback asked: "Which safe deposit box?"¹⁰⁶

105 Ibid., 98.

106 "Kambur:

'Nereden buldunuz o kağıtları?' diye sordu.

'Efendim' dedim, 'ben yeni odama dün getirildim.' [...]

'Hangi yeni oda?' dedi. [...]

'Dördüncü kattaki odama' diye sürdürdüm sözümü. 'Dün öğleye doğru. Hava yağmurluydu, bahçeden geçerken ıslanmışım.' Ne gereksiz sözler!

Kambur: 'Hangi bahçeden?' dedi.

Elimle yandaki yapıyı göstermek ister gibi bir işaret yaptım. [...]

Kambur: 'Evet?' dedi.

'Evet,' dedim.

'Akşama kadar boş oturdum. Bu sabah gelince yanımdaki çelik kasayı açtım.'

Kambur: 'Hangi çelik kasayı?' diye sordu." Ibid., 90.

This dialogue complicates the plausibility of Ísa's sense of reality, since Hunchback's placing his questions one after another with a surprised tone, as if there was no garden, no room, and no safe deposit box at all, hints at a totally different reality. Two more obligatory trips to offices in the mysterious building take place, each of which deepens the mystery. In one of the offices, Ísa is interrogated by two similar puppets, and in another one, he encounters two men short of breath and two whips on the ground.¹⁰⁷ He considers them as sportsmen of the institute rehearsing for a match and leaves the room when one of them tells Ísa that it is early for him to come to their office.

This postponed threat of physical attack increases the terror, and the messianic theme of the novel surfaces more visibly while Ísa's position as a victim crystallizes. The members of the institute more explicitly acquire the authoritarian status of destructive male power and intolerance. Ísa keeps pretending as if nothing is wrong and it is now his job to travel from one office to the other, and be interrogated by his superiors. In between the position of an innocent rebel and an insane person who lives in an alternative reality, Ísa subscribes to a role fanatically tolerant. In this dramatic act of tolerance, he reproduces the biblical figure of Jesus Christ, as he accepts his faith, instead of screaming his agony at the hands of the oppressive powers. His mind and body become a field of combat, but in an ascetic sense, Ísa celebrates this. With the transformation of his victimization into an alternative truth of heroism Ísa surfaces as a quixotic hero, who makes his own reality and resists yielding to the authority of the unidentified powers.

The novel satirizes the workplace as an arena of technical rationality. Ísa is the only one who fails to understand what is going on, and therefore is marginalized. Only when he finally is taken to an absurd court for reading some documents in the office and making copies of them, Ísa grasps his critical condition.¹⁰⁸ The terror grows as Ísa rushes to his brother-in-law's house when he is finally dismissed from the interrogation, and finds people waiting for him. Some agents question Ísa and his brother-in-law about *Solnes the Masterbuilder*, a play that Ísa borrowed from his brother-in-law's library. They attempt to make Ísa confess his cooperation with his

107 Ibid., 99.

108 Ibid., 115.

brother-in-law, Solnes, and Ibsen in the conspiracy they are building. His brother-in-law denies any knowledge of Ibsen or Solnes and leaves İsa alone in his desperate attempt to persuade the interrogators that Ibsen is a drama writer and Solnes is a fictional character. With a mordent sense of humor, this scene communicates a fight between the intellectual power of submissive masculinity and the physical power, which is gained at the cost of a lack of intelligence, of hegemonic masculinity. It also grippingly stages how individuals turn their backs on one another when in danger, with an urge to protect only themselves. As his brother-in-law stabs him in the back, it becomes increasingly difficult for İsa to understand the situation.

The narration reveals the unorthodoxy of İsa's victim position in a point of climax following this moment of epiphany: İsa unexpectedly celebrates his powerlessness as a form of power and argues that his enthusiasm for sacrificing his agency and letting people decide for him was in fact a conscious and voluntary choice. After a long catalogue of oppression and victimization that İsa happily tolerates, the narration turns to declare that none of those could actually destroy him, since his slavishness was a conscious choice, and his surrender was an exulting act of self-sacrifice. İsa argues that it is, in fact, himself who directs his directors in his slavish position. The idea that it becomes easy to manipulate the events and the people by making oneself appear as a sacrificial victim offers a sudden change of perspective and indicates that things may be quite the opposite of what they seem to be. With the transference of İsa's sacrifice of his free will and agency from a nihilist belief to a maneuver, and with a reactionary attempt to cling to the current conditions, the discrepancies between the incidents and individuals' accounts of them are expressed.

The performative nature of İsa's masculine acts express that the appropriate concept of the masculine self is a constant negotiation between taking the part of contrasting subject positions in the power hierarchy. Anday treats power as genderless and gender as a set of cultural norms, whereby men and women are expected to live up to and guide their behavior. He focuses on strategies to destabilize the dichotomy between man and woman, masculine and feminine. The associations such as man/masculinity and woman/femininity are de-naturalized in the novel by contrasting images of femininity and masculinity. Man-as-sinner/man-as-martyr stereotypes are utilized for

cultural critique. *İsa'nın Güncesi* does not involve a criticism of repression symbolized by the mysterious building and the inanimate officials. Rather, it invites the reader to ravish the humility of its protagonist and his acceptance of the situation. The protagonist fights his feelings of paranoia and also struggles against the laws and norms dictated by the powerful to get back to his previous life. The writer does not sympathize with his victimized protagonist, and this is one of this novel's real strengths.

The main accent of absurdity in *İsa'nın Güncesi* focuses on the incongruity between what people pretend their lives to be and what they actually are. The strange militaristic mimics and equipment recorded by İsa in the beginning of his odyssey suggest that he may actually be pretending his being taken under custody to be a promotion offer for a new job. His chronic loss of hearing paves the way for İsa to make his own reality, all by himself. The mysterious bureaucratic compound that İsa enthusiastically rushes to probably stands for one of the clandestine interrogation centers situated in some deserted area, where many people were taken to during military rule. It is, perhaps, one of the major local police stations. Yet, within two distinct narratives of the same events, Anday hardly gives credence to a specific one. The absurd intensifies with the unreasonable acts of the interrogators and other characters. Nobody except the members of the secret building understands what is going on, yet they quickly get used to it and do not ask questions. The novel successfully reveals the primordial thirst for blood by the powerful, in a story of modern times, constructed upon the complex nature of gender and the act of sacrifice. It develops a skeptical perspective on truth by observing how people engage differently with the events that surround their everyday lives. All incidents and relationships staged are threaded with a cynic belief that there is a hidden truth somewhere.

İsa'nın Güncesi constructs a place where nothing is as it seems, and paranoia rules. It deals with a heightened environment of surveillance, suspicion, and accusation in some unidentified time and setting, where the realistic set of contemporary city life clashes with an absurd world. In an allegorical and abstract story, the novel makes a bitter critique of a life dominated by military bureaucracy and points out at the infinite versions of the reality through the breakdown in communication between the characters. Although it has mostly been undervalued as a genuine example of March 12 novels

because of its abstract and allegorical nature, *İsa'nın Güncesi* engages, for better or worse, in a critique of dominant values of the modern individual in Turkey during the upheavals of the coup period. İsa's performance of courage, power, and agency, his virtuous appreciation of his misery, his political rationalization of his slavishness, and his return to the enigmatic institute in the end of the novel stage a dynamic and transgressing notion of identity, which also blurs gender as a static category.

CHAPTER 2
*On the Post-dictatorial Stage: March 12
by Women Writers*

“Hegemonic masculinity” gives an important cleavage to gender related studies. It has been criticized on a number of fronts as well because it presents the dominant masculinity as a uniform alliance. Hence, critics noted that it replicates the concept of “patriarchy.” Jeff Hearn argued that the focus of research on masculinities could be shifted to hegemony, breaking the couple “men and masculinities.”¹ This challenge is backed up with feminist work that made the connection of power to male bodies questionable, offering “a glimpse of how masculinity is constructed as masculinity,” as Judith Halberstam states as the foundation of “female masculinity” in her groundbreaking 1998 book with the same title.² As diversities in gender are gradually recognized, men and women became uncertain categories. Feminism in post-coup Turkey was not eager to deconstruct gender categories overall, but feminists of the era were well aware that struggle with the military is an arena of masculinity formation, and they posed new questions about the politics of gender.

Several histories of feminism in Turkey argue that the movement made its debut after the third military intervention in 1980, since gender questions seemed secondary in the politically woven 1970s. Such a view overlooks the resistance of women in the 1970s within political movements. Gender flourished as a problem in almost all fields, and literature was an important arena of dispute. Women writers of March 12 made their appearances relatively late because men occupied the frontlines of literature; however, they gave an important twist to the corpus. The first March 12 novel written by a woman came four years after the military intervention, in 1975, during a period of gestation when both the left and the right were trying to consolidate their positions after the return to democracy in 1973. Works published in this period ushered in a wave of women writers who

1 Jeff Hearn, “From Hegemonic Masculinity to the Hegemony of Men,” *Feminist Theory* 5, no. 1 (April 2004): 49–72, quote on p. 59.

2 Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 1.

explored masculinities produced by previous March 12 novels with a critical interest. Not all women writers of March 12 were feminists. While some constructed gender in essentialist terms in a traditional way, others provided a feminist interpretation of masculinities and attacked stereotyping.

The introduction of women into the fictional frame of March 12 showcased the originality of women's writing. Despite a brief presence, women were absent from the first narratives of March 12. The women's view gives us a better understanding into men's lives in post-coup Turkey by creating "a broader context and contrasting perspective from which to examine their own beliefs and behaviors, social relations and institutions," as Sandra Harding maintains.³ Women writers explored gender differences and questioned the existing givens of masculinity and femininity in their generation, as they targeted the political angst of the military intervention. Special interest was given to young people's rejection of traditional patriarchal family values in the atmosphere of March 12, which inspired a revolt against all images of authority. Testimonial accounts of the coup were an important center of gravity in the narrations, but the accounts of repression varied: from maltreatment under custody and in prison, several novels published in this period moved into themes of political exile and alienation.

My interest in women's writing concentrates on their challenge to the previously established "victimization" stories. Victimized men were a stable ground in the previous examples of March 12 novels. However, novels at the focus of this chapter help us realize the hidden instability. The challenges of women writers take different forms; left-wing writers illustrate men's collusion with power even within the position of a victim. They problematize the male subject position punctuating that "within Marxism men remain strangely unproblematic"⁴ by referring to a domain of masculine authority over women, where the authority is claimed by men deprived of power in political action. They examine how masculine power gets constructed despite traumatic experiences that attempt to demolish it, and the

3 Sandra Harding, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), 286.

4 Jeff Hearn, *The Gender of Oppression: Men, Masculinity and the Critique of Marxism* (Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1997), 221.

ways this traumatized masculinity turns into an oppressive and productive part of women's existence. Right-wing writers, on the other hand, argue that those trying to make their victimization recognized are the real ones to blame for the chaos of March 12. While left-wing writers direct their main critical focus to a broader patriarchal culture, right-wing writers insistently transfer problems related to power, domination, and destruction into the world of the leftists.⁵ They see the disturbing faces of masculinity and the violent exercise of male authority only in the leftist movements.

Left-wing women writers of this period are especially important because the legacy of some of them helped the feminist perspective gain recognition in Turkey toward the end of the 1970s. The rising political consciousness in the 1970s elevated the gender trouble discussions to a new level, and women writers offered competitive forms of political thinking. In a sense, left-wing women writers of March 12 are the pioneers of feminist historicizing in Turkey, which triggered the urge to look askew at mainstream narratives of history. They cast a critical eye on hegemonic masculinity, and explored processes that served to maintain patriarchy, when "a sociology of ruling class men" was not yet overdue in Turkey.⁶ They revealed that patriarchy is complex, since hegemonic codes are fluid and full of contradictions.⁷ They showed a keen interest to link the history of March 12 to many other phenomena, such as the patriarchal structure of the culture and its control over men and women, plus other cultural formations. This attempt is a process of deconstructing a "thick description" in itself, because it corresponds to revealing the variety of cultural codes present beneath seemingly simple structures.⁸

5 Carol Pateman, "The Fraternal-Social Contract," *Civil Society and the State* (London: Verso, 1988); John Remy, "Patriarchy and Fratriarchy as Forms of Androcracy," in *Men, Masculinities, and Social Theory* (London: Routledge and Unwin Hyman, 1990).

6 Mike Donaldson, "What Is Hegemonic Masculinity?" *Theory and Society* 22, No. 5 (1993): 643–57, 655.

7 Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), 7; Robert Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 19.

8 Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3–30.

In her influential paper titled “Sexual Discourse in Turkish Fiction: Return of the Repressed Female Identity,” Sibel Erol explores how female writers dominating the literary scene of the 1970s experienced male domination, and articulated a specific discourse on sexuality “which treats body as the locus of selfhood.”⁹ One such example is Sevgi Soysal’s *Şafak* (The Dawn, 1975), a sensational book with many autobiographical traits, which later was acknowledged as one of the highlights of March 12 fiction. I begin my analysis with *Şafak*, in which Soysal links capitalism to patriarchy in a thrilling story of political exile, and represents sites of capitalist/patriarchal power in the settings of Adana, a city under martial law. Enhanced by the physical and psychological tensions of Soysal’s exile to Adana as a revolutionary leftist writer, *Şafak* provides the accounts of the intellectual loneliness of a woman of city origin with a refreshing maturity and a profound sense of compassion. Passages of sharply observed realistic descriptions record and protest the oppressiveness of a life under military rule, while acknowledging the predicament of the individuals who became fragile victims to power. Soysal’s critical glance targets the process of victimization with sheer attention, but also explores the psychological dynamics of accepting the victim status. In addition to its vivid examination of the feudal culture in Adana, the novel is also a self-questioning narrative of a leftist revolutionary intellectual about the merits of her political devotions. The protagonist of *Şafak* immerses the reader into the uncertainties and self-doubts of an intellectual woman, who painfully recognizes the gap between the people of Adana and herself.

In the second half of the 1970s, as the increasing popularity of the leftist testimonial faction triggered an attempt in the right wing to tell the other side of the story, a new set of March 12 novels started to emerge. The works of the right wing provided a mirror image of what the left wing writers have depicted. These novels addressed the superiority of the conservative national and cultural values and emphasized the power of repressive mechanisms within the leftist groups that leave individuals at the mercy of forceful ideologies, trying to undermine the emancipation claimed by the leftist worldview. Emine Işınsu (Okçu)’s novels are worthy of attention in this sense.

9 Sibel Erol, “Sexual Discourse in Turkish Fiction: Return of the Repressed Female Identity,” *Edebiyat* 6 (1995): 187.

After *Şafak*, I will move on to *Sancti* (Stitch, 1975), a novel that stigmatizes leftist revolutionaries and praises the anticommunist youth as the real heroes. *Sancti* is the (fictionalized) life story of Ertuğrul Dursun Önkuzu, a *martyr* of the right wing, in which Işinsu claims the witness status for the members of the anticommunist youth, who sacrificed their lives in order to protect the nation against destructive Western ideological imports.

My next stop will be Pınar Kür, who, in her debut novel *Yarın Yarın* (1976), asks whether someone who belongs to a different class or ideology can be loved or allied. *Yarın Yarın* explores the bourgeois settings in 1970s Istanbul, with a keen interest in women's struggles to be subjects in their own lives, and asks if women could get liberated through sexual freedoms. Beset by the idea that Marxism under-theorizes the distinctiveness of male power, Kür deals with love, freedom, and subservience, and negotiates women's chances to live their own lives, on their own terms.¹⁰ The novel asks whether women should stress their differences from men or strive to demonstrate their similarities with men. Kür constructs a gripping love affair with psychologically well-founded characters that invite empathy.

The final novel analyzed in this chapter is *Zor* (Hard, 1977) by Sevinç Çokum, another right-wing writer. Similar to Emine Işinsu's *Sancti*, Çokum's *Zor* focuses on the life of a boy of village origin, who struggles in subscribing to new manners and lifestyles in the city. Çokum turns to the slums of Istanbul, and narrates how the disintegration of the family as a social formation contributed to the polarization of the political atmosphere. Both Işinsu's *Sancti* and Çokum's *Zor* challenge the previously established victim role by illustrating leftist revolutionary characters as loafers, and confronting them with self-conscious and patriotic characters. These novels are not only conservative reactions against revolutionary leftism, they are also reactions to the emerging youth culture, and the contemporary iden-

10 Several feminists have criticized Marx's model for being gender blind. See for example Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1970); Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Toward a More Progressive Union," in *Women and Revolution*, ed. L. Sargent (Boston: South End Press, 1980), 1–41; Nancy Hartsock, *Money, Sex, and Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1983).

tity politics that was flourishing in the oppositional movement.¹¹ Işınsu and Çokum rely on the equation of woman and nation, which is a major premise of nationalist rhetoric and literature, and they side with the official historiography by blaming the left-wing anarchism for the chaos.

In the late 1970s, some major books of Turkist ideology were reissued to support the task of challenging the leftist versions of solidarity and martyrdom. The most important of these were *Bozkurtların Ölümü* (The Death of Greywolves) and *Bozkurtlar Diriliyor* (The Greywolves Resurrection), two popular novels of Nihal Atsız, a leading ideologue of Pan-Turkism.¹² Atsız's discussion of "models of heroic self-sacrifice and courage" echoes most visibly in Işınsu's novel, because Işınsu constructs her story about a hero who falls in love with a woman from the enemy camp, but who "heroically" fights his feelings.¹³ Çokum does not provide illustrations of heroic patriotism, but she borrows something equally characteristic of Turkist discourses from Atsız: the discussion of Turkishness and "its valued traditions,"¹⁴ which, of course, turn a cold shoulder to feminism. Işınsu and Çokum try to demystify leftist connotations of freedom and self-sacrifice by showing how "alienated" the leftists were from their genuine national identity. Right-wing female intellectuals do not adopt the term feminist, as they aim to differentiate themselves from their leftist "sisters." They relate women to home and men to the workplace, constituting a kind of "family feminism," which celebrate men as the breadwinner and the decision maker, and dress women with the duty to serve the men and children.

11 In *Türkiye'de Gençlik Miti* (The Myth of Youth in Turkey), Demet Lüküslü provides a profile analysis of the politicized university youth of the 1970s. Demet Lüküslü, *Türkiye'de Gençlik Miti* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009), 57–103.

12 Umut Üzer, "Racism in Turkey: The Case of Hüseyin Nihal Atsız," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 22, no. 1 (2002): 119–30.

13 Jacob Landau, "Ultra-Nationalist Literature in the Turkish Republic: A Note on the Novels of Hüseyin Nihal Atsız," *Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 2 (2003): 207.

14 Jacob Landau, "Ultra-Nationalist Literature in the Turkish Republic: A Note on the Novels of Hüseyin Nihal Atsız," *Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 2 (2003): 204.

Novelists explored in this chapter take up the subject of military intervention at an unusual moment of transition in Turkey's history and also in their careers. All four novels to be discussed have a "non-man" at the center of their stories as pivots in a war of hegemony between men. All of the novels except *Zor* have female protagonists, and writers use the in-betweenness of these women, their confusion and struggling in the violent atmosphere of a male-stream fight, to comment on the grip of ideologies, and the individuals' desperate need for connection. *Zor* has a child worker at its focus, a boy, who just like a woman, stands in a realm of oppression by men. These novels deal with the fierce encounter between the left and the right in 1970s Turkey in the framework of personal relationships. They approach the problem of love and domination by means of women and men of different classes and rival camps, who become attracted to each other. They deal with the definition of man and woman in a capitalist culture, and question the power that comes with financial wealth. In these novels, female characters are obsessive sites of masculine evaluation and judgment, and the novels achieve success in meshing gender issues with the political upheavals of the period.

Şafak and *Yarın Yarın* immerse the reader in the stories of women cloistered in the clutches of patriarchy. They question if people can renounce their social class and change sides, and whether men can give up their gender privilege and unite with women in their fight for liberation. These are challenging questions to ask, considering that the revolutionary leftist movement in Turkey was overwhelmingly male and lacking an established proletarian class. The novels are centered in the parallels between patriarchy and political domineering, and between patriarchy and capitalism. An important question posed by Michel Foucault echoes in these narrations. In his introduction to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, Foucault asks "How does one keep from being fascist, even (especially) when one believes oneself to be a revolutionary militant? How do we rid our speech and our acts, our hearts and our pleasures, of fascism? How do we ferret out the fascism that is ingrained in our behavior?"¹⁵ From this very Foucauldian point, these novels

15 Michel Foucault, "Introduction," in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), xiii.

challenge the image of the victimized men presented by the pioneering March 12 novels, and show that although there is a systematic *unmanning* of some men by superior powers, there is also a realm for their *remanning* themselves by oppressing the women and the less manly.

While *Şafak* and *Yarın Yarın* negotiate the highlights of change and of women's liberation sympathetically, *Sanct* and *Zor* approach their vision of a new world critically. They rehearse representations of Turkish nationalists of rural origin and position these images against the despondency of urban and bourgeois-turned revolutionaries. Both novels are influenced with right-wing bigotry, and while doing the ideological work of national consolidation, they mark a political perspective that considers dialectical materialism and class struggle as heresy. *Sanct* is a narrative of persuasion, which attempts to introduce greywolves as the misjudged beasts of March 12. It voices an elegy for the losses of the *ülküci* movement, members of which clashed with revolutionary leftists in the streets, risking their lives.

Although *Zor* does not surrender to the propagandistic stereotypes of "barbaric revolutionaries," it also leans on a Manichean characterization, which represents the political conflict in terms of "being responsible citizens" and "being traitors." *Zor* shifts the focus from women's struggles in the men's world to a boy's rite of passage into manhood. This is a book comprised of poignant collections of individual experiences that create a panoramic picture of 1970s Turkey, and it draws a picture of city life to negotiate the contrasting ideologies. In *Zor*, not all revolutionaries are violent, but they are either idle, or decadent and money hungry. The novel tries to install hope for a rescue by means of God, with its young protagonist's recollections of his religious grandmother.

A motivating question for this chapter is whether women writers employed more challenging discourses to explore men's insecurity and inadequacy in the framework of the events of March 12. Did they succeed to mine through the political rivalry that coated the struggle for power in the atmosphere of the military intervention? We need closer readings of the books to answer this question with detail, but let me say in passing that the central claim of this chapter is that women writers go outside the parameters of victimized men, and supplement the critique of earlier examples of March 12 novels with a new analysis of patriarchy. Novels explored in this

chapter add to the radical critiques of the previous chapter of the conventions of male heroism, and the currency of gender conventions, particularly masculinity. There was a fear of being considered “less manly,” as a leitmotiv in the novels analyzed in the first chapter, which gave voice to the persecuted male. Novels by women show that the anxiety of being considered less manly by others is not limited to men under oppression.

MARXIST, FEMINIST, EXILED: FEMALE MASCULINITY
IN SEVGI SOYSAL'S *ŞAFAK*

“Diversity in masculinity is not enough,” says R. W. Connell, “we must also recognize the relations between the different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance, dominance, and subordination.”¹⁶ In *Şafak*, Soysal masterfully depicts such relations around the gender anxiety of an educated and urban-raised woman in the local settings of the “macho” town of Adana, a provincial city in Eastern Anatolia, where she was exiled to for two and a half months after the military takeover. She compares and contrasts men of different ethnic, religious, and class identities. In the panoramic view of Adana, Soysal presents a revolutionary-leftist woman in exile that gets stuck in the alien world of local workers, leftists, nationalist rightists, privileged capitalists, and also men with official and bureaucratic sanction.

It is the comparison of these masculinities from the eyes of the novel's alienated female protagonist that makes this novel an important node in the project of this book. Soysal discusses police brutality, community segregation, and economic disparity. From material exploitation and oppression, the narration moves to discuss sexual and political exploitation and oppression. The novel is a rich source for the analysis of gender discourses coded into the representation of different political engagements. Soysal does not let it go un-commented, the “unhappy marriage of Marxism to feminism.”¹⁷

16 R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press; Sydney: Allen & Unwin; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 37.

17 Heidi Hartmann, “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union,” in *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: A Debate on Class and Patriarchy* (London: Polity Press, 1986).

Şafak introduces the idea that masculinity cannot be fully understood without taking into account women's relationships with dominant masculinities, and also women's collusion with masculine behaviors, namely "female masculinity," a term that gathered the attention it deserves after Judith Halberstam, who made the arbitrary connection of masculinity to straight, white male bodies questionable.¹⁸ Men and masculinity are hard to separate in countries such as Turkey, where most leaders (political, spiritual, and so on), and followers are men. With *Şafak*, Soysal opens a discussion on women's approach to power and further problematizes gender hierarchies. *Şafak* invites questions on the overwhelmingly "cultural" character of gender, referring to biological foundations of gender segregation. Although she makes apparent that men have greater access to valued resources in the society than women, Soysal examines the breakdown of traditional gender roles and invites a look out of the orbit of "male-bashing."

Şafak centers on Oya Ertem, the exiled revolutionary activist, whose narrative voice occasionally mixes with that of the protagonist. Much of the novel's poignancy depends on Oya's helplessness and her thinking of the limitations imposed on her by gender. Her solitude and alienation constitute the fulcrums of the narration as Oya's ordeal of adjustment to the repressive conditions of Adana form the central story. The novel primarily explores her struggles, but it also sheds light on the toll taken on those who endured similar political ordeals. Soysal presents a complex picture of patriarchy, and maintains that a diversity of actual experiences should be taken into account to explain gender hierarchies.

Şafak opens with a chapter entitled "Raid," which portrays the storm of police agents to a shack in the slums of Adana on a mild autumn evening. Characterized with tussles in the streets, beaten men and women, and regular raids of the narcotic police, the poor neighborhood crystallizes as a place for the underprivileged. One of those convened at the shack for a casual dinner is Oya, an intellectual of city origin, exiled to Adana. She attracts the immediate attention of the townspeople as she checks in at the main hotel in Adana, where she is obliged to accommodate herself for a period of time

18 Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 1.

and will be checked on a regular basis. Oya befriends a few revolutionary leftist people in the city: Hüseyin, a lawyer, and his cousin Mustafa, a teacher, and she visits the shack of their uncle Ali, upon their invitation. At a dinner, Oya gets to know Mustafa and Hüseyin better, and she also meets Ali's wife Gülşah, her sister Ziynet, and Ziynet's fiancée Zekeriya. Oya becomes surprised by the poor treatment of women during the dinner, and she also realizes that Gülşah and Ziynet, who unconsciously treat her as if she was a man, seem to accept themselves as substandard. Her intellectual capital masculinizes Oya and strips her of her femininity.

The episodic histories set important terms of the characters' understanding of class, politics, and life in general, and portray the consanguineous bonds between the male members of the family. A cluster of graphic personal histories delineates the lack of wealth in the quarter, while readers are lured into the male-dominated culture of the working-class home. The crisis of working-class masculine identity is introduced through familial tropes of work and capital, which are swiftly connected to the specific historical and political context of the March 12 period characterized by the upheavals. Oya's gender conflict gives the novel a parallel drama to its central drama of political oppression. With their objectified images, Gülşah and Ziynet provide means for Oya to have an opinion about the men she has been accompanying at the dinner table. They also motivate her toward a comparison of gender discourses of her revolutionary leftism and the patriarchal conditions of rural Adana.

As the memories of his arrest and now fallen-apart marriage unfold, it becomes clear that one of the guests, Mustafa, also has a history of activism and arrest, similar to Oya. Mustafa's recollections indicate how he found himself struggling between revolutionary ideals and the male privileges offered to him by the feudal culture. Mustafa's memoirs of his relationships with his ex-wife and his cousin Hüseyin create the discussion on the patriarchal bonds between the male members of the family. With these figures, we are given a clear picture of feudal allegiances that will control the protagonists' actions at every step. We learn that Ali helped his nephews Hüseyin and Mustafa to graduate, at the expense of his own daughter's education. Soysal underlines that this is a homosocial organization, a structure for maintaining and transmitting power between men and through male bonds.

The subject of male spaces, that is, spaces of male friendship and attachment, requires a critical look at the exclusivity of men, which Eve Sedgwick refers to as homosociality.¹⁹ Although Sedgwick is considered “the mother” of this discussion, research on the term is interdisciplinary in nature, as the origination of the term “male bonding” can be traced to the work of anthropologist Lionel Tiger, who proposed that “men ‘need’ some haunts and/or occasions which exclude females.”²⁰ The discussion on patriarchal bonds initiates a discussion on men’s homosocial bondings, and the novel opens the greater nature/culture problem. Several researchers on gender suggest that there is insufficient evidence that origins of patriarchy are physical in origin; therefore, a likely consensus is that it is culture that causes domination and subordination between men and women.²¹ Soysal’s preoccupation with the origins of patriarchy follows a similar skepticism against the “culture” paradigm, as she successfully questions the biologically “polarized” gender system assigning alternating (domineering and submissive) roles to men and women, but at the same time, she asks questions about body and biology. While narrating Mustafa’s story, Soysal opens a discussion on men’s victimization under the heavy burden of the tradition they are supposed to carry. Men’s victimization, at the same time, delineates how police brutality became the dominant form of social control during the coup d’état, and traumatized masses of people.

As Mustafa mourns his mistakes and dwells on his memories, we learn that in fear, he made his wife Güler, who was pregnant at the time, open the door when the police came to arrest him. The “hiding behind a pregnant woman” scene is further dramatized by Mustafa’s supplicatory attempts to convince the major at the door of his innocence, to avoid arrest:

“Major, you see it is a false denunciation... Can I now go to work, Major? My wife is pregnant, Major.” He does not want to think at all, which is why he said “my wife is pregnant.” Güler had glanced at him, and not spoken a word to the major,

19 Eve Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

20 Lionel Tiger, *Men in Groups* (New York: Boyars, 1984), 208.

21 Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics* (London: Sphere, 1971), 24–25.

neither a “come in” nor anything else. But he had talked, unnecessarily. Even respectfully, thinking he will be dismissed. Hiding his fear of the raid.²²

Mustafa’s regret underscores the negative social weight of acting unmanly. More important than that, it shows that feudal images of manly power and courage are not remote images at all, even in the enlightened visions of the revolutionary leftists.

Soysal reveals the potentially destructive and disabling side of the feudal culture, in a manner that also seems to understand the ambiguous nature of manhood. In deference to masculinity, she delicately shows how the culture insists on one quality, while ideologies insist on opposite ones and leave people amidst a welter of anxieties. Mustafa’s absence from his torn-apart family suggests a wounded masculine pride and a repressed anxiety about his “less manly” position in the house of his uncle, due to his being abandoned by his wife and left without any financial means. Trying to comfort him and the other guests, Ali’s wife Gülşah and her sister Ziyet make vigorous efforts during dinner. Both women come to the fore as patriarchal allegory of female duty, as figures banished from other areas of knowledge and power. The narrator caricatures their will to serve by the almost masochistic race they pushed themselves into since the morning of the dinner, trying to complete household chores:

“I will cook for Zekeriya every day,” Ziyet had said. “Do it, do it! So that he will be horny and puff your belly up every year” [...] It was Gülşah’s experience in cleaning onions, peeling potatoes, preparing *çiğköfte* and doughs talking. [...] Gülşah was not able to care even for the pain that moves from her belly to her knees and from her knees to her brain. She wiped the floor moaning, shook out the rugs. She got angry at

22 “‘Binbaşım görüyorsunuz ki ihbar asılsızmış... İşime gidebilir miyim Binbaşım? Karım gebe Binbaşım.’ Evet, hele o, ‘karım gebe’ sözcüğünü niçin söylediğini düşünmek bile istemiyordu. Güler şöyle bir bakmıştı Mustafa’ya. Sessizce. Binbaşıya hiçbir şey dememişti Güler. Ne ‘buyrun’ ne başka bir söz. Hiçbir şey. Oysa kendi, gereksizce konuşmuştu işte. Baskına duyduğu nefreti gizleyerek... Hatta saygılı. Bırakılacağı umuduyla.” Sevgi Soysal, *Şafak*, 21.

Ziynet's supposed-to-be help, doing everything superficially and not giving full attention to work.²³

Defining the shack in feudal class terms, where males are the privileged gender that appropriate female surplus labor, and illustrating women's acceptance of servitude in ways that are destructive to them, Soysal draws the household as the main site where gender inequality is produced.

The marriage contract as a source of patriarchy is another widely researched topic, which links women and labor (and also men and capital), and serves as the foundation of a critique of male appropriation of female labor as discussed, for example, by Christine Delphy in "The Main Enemy."²⁴ The sexually separated household is a major point of interest in Soysal's novel, which is further expressed in Oya's observation that she is taken as "a man" at the dinner by the other women, Gülşah and Ziynet, who serve to the men at the table but do not sit and eat with them. Oya feels thrilled due to the women's acceptance of the sexual division of labor, and their subordination: "Oya is neither female nor male; in their eyes she is an extension of the men they serve. [...] She is suffering like a creature stuck in the atmosphere of the chitchat and the dinner table. For a moment, she wanted to get up and go next to Gülşah and Ziynet, then she hoped that she could make them sit with her at the table, but she backed off, thinking that neither move would be appropriate."²⁵ Her astonishment indicates that Oya does not fit for the image of the domesticated woman, who is necessary to sustain culture. As she down

23 "'Zekeriya'ya her gün taze yemek yapacağım' demişti Ziynet. 'Aman yap yap! Yap da daşsağı azsın, hut dağı gibi her yıl şişirşin karnını' [...] Yıllardır ayıkladığı soğanların, soyduğu patateslerin, yoğurduğu köftelerin, açtığı hamurların birikimiydi Gülşah'i söyleten. [...] Gülşah belinden dizine, dizinden bey-nine, çektikçe uzayan sancısını bile umursayamıyor. Yer taşlarını inleye inleye bir güzel sildi, yağlıları silkti. Sözde yardım eden Ziynet'in her işi yarım yamalak yapmasına, aklını işe komamasına bozuldu." Soysal, *Şafak*, 46.

24 Christine Delphy, "The Main Enemy," in *Close to Home* (London: Hutchinson, 1984), 57-77.

25 "Oya ne kadın, ne erkek, sadece hizmet ettikleri erkeklerin bir uzantısı onların gözünde. [...] Sohbetin, sofranın havasında sıkışıp kalmış yarı kadın yarı erkek bir yaratık gibi acı çekiyor. Bir an kalkıp Gülşah'la Ziynet'in yanına gitmek istedi, sonra onların da sofraya oturmalarını sağlamayı umdu, ama iki davranışın da sırtıcağı korkusuyla vazgeçti." Soysal, *Şafak*, 26.

heartedly observes that women are not seen, heard, but expected to serve and fulfill the requests of men, Oya feels terrorized. The narrator marks her pitiful observation as the trigger that drags Oya into a negotiation of the moral landscape within which she lives as a compulsory and temporary resident. This observation ignites Oya's relentless exploration of her gender, ambitions, and emotional and intellectual capacities.

To move forward into the issue of women's sexual subordination the narrator utilizes Zekeriya's nationalistic and male chauvinistic masculinity. Similar to Hüseyin and Mustafa, the history of Ziyne's husband Zekeriya alludes to poverty and lack of privileges. Zekeriya appears as a man who treats his wife more like a commodity. While narrating how sex fits into the life of Ziyne, the narrator mockingly draws attention to her dutiful mood and expresses how virginity was a major issue during the first night of the couple:

On their first night Zekeriya did not even disrobe Ziyne. He uncouthly pinched her in there and then with a thrust he instantaneously ejaculated. After that, he pushed her saying "move away a bit" and inspected the blood on the sheets. Understanding that the thing called sex has just ended, Ziyne did not pay attention to Zekeriya because of the pain between her legs. She was not used to thinking deeply about incidents. But when she woke up in the middle of the night because of Zekeriya's snores, she thought that she should get used to it and blushed as if she thought of something inappropriate.²⁶

More than any other scene in the novel, this humorous narration of the quick intercourse paints a clear picture of a woman's status in the men's world of Adana. Symbolically linking sexual inequality to social oppression, this scene successfully illustrates how sex becomes

26 "İlk gece Ziyne'i soyamamıştı bile Zekeriya. Önce orasını kabaca çimdikle-miş, sonra zorlamasıyla boşalması bir olmuştu. Ardından 'az yana çekil kız' diye Ziyne'i iteleyip çarşaftaki kanı incelemişti. Sevişme denen şeyin böyle-ce başlayıp bitmiş olduğunu kavrayan Ziyne, apış arasının sızısıyla durma-mıştı üstünde. Olayları öyle enine boyuna kurcalama alışkanlığı da yoktu. Yalnız, gece yarısı Zekeriya'nın horultusuyla uyandığında, erkek horultusu-na alışmam gerek, diye düşünmüş, sanki ayıp bir şey düşünmüş gibi alev alev yanıyordu yanakları." Soysal, *Şafak*, 54.

the ultimate triumph of men over women in the feudal culture and how it emerges as a part of a bigger drama. Zekeriya's embodiment of his feudal masculine privileges resonates with the gender conceptions of his political engagement. As a member of the anticommunist Greywolves, Zekeriya lacks a proper class-consciousness; he accepts inequalities as given and therefore perpetuates manners that help them to continue.

A second chapter entitled "Interrogation" stages the rest of the evening. The casual dinner party warms up with political discussions, the police intrude upon the house, and the night ends at the local police station with Oya's being taken into custody together with the male members of the household. As the police hound the characters, even the most boastful figures of feudal masculinity become deprived of power and turn into "feminized" victims. Learning that some revolutionary activists are prosecuted, security officer Zekai leaves his inveterate bridge party with the businessmen of Adana and proudly makes his way to the police station. Zekai's sidekick Abdullah beats Ali, while Zekai condescendingly interrogates Oya. The interrogation plot animates a discussion of female masculinity, in which Oya questions her being a woman and examines her endurance for aggression in the police station as a forced role of masculinity. To reach a more personal, relatable level with the broad theme of falling victim to superior powers and to mirror the dreadful unity of power and abuse, Soysal uses the inner turmoil of Oya in her trial of adjustment to life in Adana. Under custody in a city governed by martial law, Oya's gender trouble turns into a deeper and more destroying victimization.

Oya's confrontation with the police officer Zekai constitutes the climax of the novel. The encounter indicates that the roots of individual aggression are deep and complex, and violence actually has many tangled parts. Zekai slights Oya's status as a married woman and berates her with questions about her whereabouts. Oya finds herself powerless like a child trying to endure intolerance by proving that there is no wrongdoing:

"How can you explain missus that a married woman, a married woman with a child, gets together with men whom she does not know at all for drinks?" The word missus bangs like a filthy slap. "I was not drinking." Oya blushes. I could have drunk as

well. [...] My god, what does this have to do with this custody? [...] "You were drinking, we know everything." "I can drink or prefer not to, that is none of your business." [...] "Why were you with men?" "There were women too." Oya feels angry at herself for taking defensive positions. These bourgeois morals in our heads [...] We are trying to protect them everywhere, although we don't like them at all. Oya blushes again and she decides to break up with the entire familiar, known, unreasonable shames. With a deep breath she discharges them and shouts with a strengthened voice: "Are you an ethics patrol?" Zekai is now angry because of the dissolution of the game. "So it was late night work you say you were on?" "Are you a police officer or a sex maniac?"²⁷

Trying not to make a public display of her grief, Oya does not accept any fault in her thinking or actions, which pushes Zekai into a frenzy of anger. He slaps her in the face, grips her hair, and hits Oya's head against the wall vowing violent threats. Nevertheless, he fails to obtain either a testimony or any information about the gathering of the people at the shack that night and eventually sends Oya back to her cell.

The aggressive police officer Zekai is positioned as a man who married for wealth following the counseling of his mother and got stuck in an unhappy marriage. The novel does not plunge the reader into the life of Zekai, but makes mocking swipes at it and criticizes the bourgeois monogamous marriage while, at the same time, draws attention to the complicated coexistence of tenderness and violence in the human psyche by showing Zekai as a loving father devoted to

27 "‘Evli bir kadının, hem de çocuklu bir kadının, alemin herifleriyle içki içmesini nasıl açıklarsınız hanımefendi?’” Hanımefendi sözcüğü pis bir şamar gibi şaklıyor. ‘İçki içmiyordum ben.’ Oya kızarıyor. Hay Allah, içerim içmem. [...] İçkinin bütün bu olan bitenle ilgisi ne? [...] ‘İçiyormuşsunuz. Biz her şeyi biliriz!’ ‘İçerim içmem. Sizi ilgilendirmez.’ [...] ‘Ne işiniz var onca erkek arasında?’ ‘Kadınlar da vardı.’ Yine savunmaya giriştiğine kızıyor Oya. Kafamıza sinmiş bir burjuva namus anlayışıyla. Her yerde korumaya çalışıyoruz bu anlayışı, istemesek de. Yanakları yeniden kızarıyor Oya’nın. Alışıldık, bildik, anlamsız utanmalardan sıyrılmaya karar veriyor yeniden. Büyük bir solukla dışarı atıyor bunları. Güçlenen bir sesle bağıırveriyor: ‘Ahlak zabıtası mısınız yoksa?’ Zekai bey oyunun bozulmasından öfkeli. ‘Akşam akşam orospuluğa ha?’ ‘Polis misiniz yoksa seksomanyak m?’” Soysal, *Şafak*, 76.

his daughter. By adding Zekai's unhappy marriage to the picture, Soysal suggests an ambiguous link between the oppressor and the oppressed, which is developed further in the course of the novel with references to the greater powers that manage individuals. The possibility that Zekai is in fact a humane person, who is forced by the obligation of his position as a police officer to oppress people, is quickly renounced. Zekai is split into two contrasting masculinities. His contrasting faces show that the border between the good/tender and the bad/violent defines a narrow space, which can easily be passed across; one moment Zekai remembers he promised crayons to his daughter, and the next he notices a stain of blood on the chair in his office and gets aroused discovering that Oya is menstruating.

Soysal attempts to deconstruct men to build her critique of masculinity and shows that men change in many directions. She is likewise attentive to the deconstruction of femininity. When Oya suspects that she may be having her period while in her cell, she finds herself ultimately helpless, thinking such a condition will prove her vulnerability and inferior position to her interrogators. A healthy cycle suddenly becomes a sign of subordination. Soysal's punctuation of women's alienation from their body by means of Oya's panic is a similarly unsettling version of Germaine Greer's famous remarks about the female body and menstruation.²⁸ Oya's menstruation embodies gender more swiftly than any other feature of the body could ever do. Although she criticizes herself for being alienated from her body and carrying it as "something mysterious and something to be ashamed of," Oya finds herself drawn into panic.²⁹ Zekai recognizes the situation after Oya has left his room and confirms his vigorous superiority with the stain of blood left on the seat:

He stood up distorted by rage. He paced up and down in the room. He stopped in front of the seat where Oya had been seated. There was a bloodstain on the seat. He panicked for a moment. Did she... stealthily... her wrists? But she seemed fine, as healthy as a pig. He suddenly gasped. Smiled. Felt a twitch in his belly. Hooker! She sat next to me defying... You will take this type, grasp them in the hair... He uneasily sup-

28 Germaine Greer, "The Wicked Womb," *The Female Eunuch* (New York: Farrar, Straus Giroux, 2002), 536.

29 Soysal, *Şafak*, 72.

pressed his lust. Before turning back to his seat he rang the bell, told the caretaker to wipe the seat. "Tell Abdullah to bring the teacher here!"³⁰

Emphasizing the fragile body of Oya, this scene communicates a lost war of gender and expresses that there are things that Oya cannot and never will be able to escape, although she subscribes to a masculine role and succeeds in encountering violent masculinities valiantly.

After Oya, Zekai interrogates Mustafa. Mustafa's interrogation begins with a sudden slap in the face and continues as a soul-wrenching rite of passage. Zekai lectures him on patriotism, realism, love for people and the country, but fails to make Mustafa "confess" that they were convened in the shack for a meeting to organize workers for a revolution. Every time Zekai insults Oya, calling her a hooker to tease Mustafa, Mustafa becomes frustrated, thinking that Zekai insults his wife Güler as well.³¹ Such a quickly established link between Oya and Güler hints at Mustafa's self-sustained role as the guardian and rescuer of women, which alludes to his feudal vanities as well as the heroic aggrandizement inherent in revolutionary masculinity. Showing that Mustafa conforms to the pattern of any ordinary man in Adana, who would hardly resist another man insulting his wife sexually, this small detail carries strong critical connotations of the intellectual construction of revolutionary masculinity.

The officers keep Oya, Ali, Hüseyin and Mustafa at the station without any explanation. They force them to write testimonials and to confess that the casual dinner party was, in fact, a secret political meeting. Left in a room to write her testimonial, Oya finds herself terrified because of a billy club intentionally left on the desk by Abdullah. The billy club takes Oya back to the memories of the days

30 "Hışımlla kalktı koltuğundan. Odada bir iki gezindi. Az önce Oya'nın oturduğu koltuğun üzerinde duraksadı. Kan lekesi vardı koltukta. Bir an korktu. Yoksa bileğini falan gizliden. Yok canım turp gibi, domuz gibiydi. Hemen ne olduğunu kavrayıverdi. Sırıttı. Sonra karnında bir kıpırtı duydu. Orospu! Oturmuş bir de karşımda [...] Alacaksın böylesini, tutacaksın saçlarından [...] İçinde kabaran şehveti güçlkle bastırdı. Koltuğa yeniden oturmadan zili çaldı. İçeri giren hademeye koltuğu silmesini söyledi. Söyle Abdullah'a öğretmeni getirsin!" Soysal, *Şafak*, 113.

31 Ibid., 123.

she had spent in prison before she was sent to Adana. Characterized by the ill treatment of political prisoners, which includes beatings and the rape of women with billies, these flashback memories depict a riveting expression of the dark legacy of the coup. As Oya harks back to the thrilling conditions of the prison and remembers her inmates one by one, a vivid ethnography about the women's ward becomes the major narration.

We follow a different cluster of individual stories, including those of political prisoners, such as Sema, a victim of rape during interrogation, and Çiğdem, who threw herself from the window thinking her interrogators would eventually kill her. There are also other prisoners like Menekşe, Güllü, and Firdevs, low class and undereducated women used for smuggling drugs or forced to co-operate in murder plots. These women are unaware of the political clash that influence the country, lack any ideological consciousness, and fail to understand and appreciate the fight of the political prisoners. These memories haunt Oya's attempts to sustain her courage at the police station. She feels that it is being a woman that victimizes her in the first place. Soysal also casts a critical eye at women's engagement with power and includes a female guard, Zafer, as well, alluding to the fact that gender identities do not form in isolation but "are produced together, in the process that makes a gender order."³² Thrilled by the memories of violence she witnessed and the alienation she experienced, Oya unconsciously writes "BILLY" on the paper as her testimonial.

The custody plot also ridicules the theater of authoritarianism staged by the officers and casts a critical eye at the men's cell where Ali, Hüseyin, Mustafa, Zekeriya, and Ekrem engage in different patterns of valor and fear. The custody cell turns into a space for self-confession, regret, and a harsh questioning of the abusiveness of state power, where a probe into masculinity and being "a real man" also becomes part of the discussion. The two Kurdish men, Teberdar and Veysi, who are brought to the custody cell late at night, complicate the problem of police brutality that the novel engages with, by introducing another dimension to this complex question. Along their stories, ethnicity rises as another important point of gravity to judge the

32 R. W. Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 40.

reasons of oppression. When Abdullah comes to the custody cell and tells Ekrem that he is released, Zekeriya, the dedicated Greywolf, feels terrified for being assumed to be a leftist. He seeks cooperation with Abdullah saying that he does not belong to the revolutionaries. His speech mirrors Mustafa's earlier begging to the police officer at his doorstep and illustrates how the "manly man" Greywolf subscribes to the fearful role of a small child in his encounter with the police officer Abdullah:

"Brother, did you ask him about me, brother? You know I have just arrived from Iskenderun today, brother. You can just tell him that I don't have a clue about these incidents. I don't approve Mustafa, brother. He is not my relative, he is my wife's family. I did not say a word during dinner because I know about his anarchism." [...] Because of hunger, anxiety, fatigue, and Zekeriya's speech, Mustafa feels sick. In case they have asked, he would now give the testimonial he earlier refused to write as follows: "Zekeriya, Ekrem, and I decided to establish an organization. Our aim was to make workers in Adana Marxist-Leninist." Full stop.³³

While Ali is kept apart in another cell, half blind from the beatings, the others discuss the possible consequences of their custody. Mustafa tries to endure the pain of Zekai's beatings. Hüseyin finds himself captivated in fear while waiting for his turn to be interrogated. The narrator maintains a dim view of Hüseyin, who is unable to keep his fear under control. On the one hand, Hüseyin fears interrogation but on the other, he wants to be interrogated, violently if possible, thinking that this will prove to Mustafa and the others his importance as a revolutionary figure. Mustafa thinks "even torture would not suit him" for it is a rite of passage only some people

33 "Abi, beni sordun mu abi? Ben bu akşam İskenderun'dan geldim biliyorsun abi. Bir şeyden habarım olmadığını diyivereydin. Ben bu Mustafa'yı tasvip falan etmem abi. Benim hısmım değil, karımın hısmı. Anarşikliğini bildiğimden ağzımı bile açmadım yemekte." [...] Açlıktan, sinirden, yorgunluktan ve biraz da Zekeriya'nın konuşmasından midesi bulaniyor Mustafa'nın. Yazamadığı ifadeyi şöyle yazacak şimdi isteseler: "Ben, Zekeriya ve Ekrem bir örgüt kurmaya karar verdik. Amacımız Adana işçilerini Marksist-Leninist yapmaktır. Nokta." Soysal, *Şafak*, 134.

can succeed at and because Hüseyin would make a big deal out of it. In this way, he defines a heroic masculinity that has silent suffering as its main trope.³⁴

It is interesting to detect that both the stereotyped figures of the macho and the weakling are presented in a negative light. Not only the custody cell, but also the police bureau becomes a repository of gendered anxieties. Zekai's assistant Abdullah appears as another anxious man, for he feels insecure about his boss's reactions about his performance of brutality. He knows he is supposed to harass those under custody but when it comes to Mustafa-the-teacher, Abdullah remembers how his teacher used to beat him back at school and becomes immobilized. Recalling Abdullah's earlier experiences of harassment and intimidation while in military service, and linking those memories to his current condition under the command of another aggressive and violent man like Zekai, the novel asks if it may be possible to think of tyrannical and authoritarian acts as "masquerades". Abdullah's memories hauntingly show that asserting strength and violence are inherent to the acts of teaching and disciplining in the culture of the traditionalist Turkish society. His immobilization, however, suggests that although individuals engage in such prototypical violence subconsciously and normalize it as a natural part of their lives, they still carry with them the tenacity to negotiate and refuse such physical abuse of power.

The chapter "Dawn" brings the novel to an end, as Zekai is ordered by his superiors to release all the detainees the next day, early in the morning. With the release, the possibility to access a new life opens up for the characters. Hüseyin and Mustafa leave in opposite directions. Ali makes his way back to the factory where he works, but the owner of the factory sends him off, after learning his whereabouts during the night. In the dawn of Adana, Oya observes the daily routine of the people and she incisively realizes that her sufferings possess little importance for ordinary people. The novel ends, while in hindsight, Oya captures her inferiority first as a woman and then as a revolutionary woman, after one of the locals intimidates her on the street as soon as she is released. The irony is startling, particularly when seen in relation to the breakdown Oya experiences. Having witnessed how women's bodies and lives are

³⁴ Ibid., 143.

traditionally valued as commodities in Adana, and recently released from the world of authoritarian and aggressive police masculinities to another world of less powerful but equally intimidating civil masculinities, Oya decides that the road to salvation for women has not been built yet. The recognition of gender as a significant political category seems a far ideal to her. If it is considered that her release also stands for a shift from the police station, an anticommunist chamber, to the streets of Adana, a setting where people do not care about anything else than making a living, this utopian idea of salvation also implies to her revolutionary ideals. The abstract vision of the future symbolized by the breaking dawn carries hesitant overtones, as Oya decides that it is not yet time for women to rise for a revolution.

The end of the novel posits being a woman as a state of helplessness, although it tries to claim the upsetting experiences it produces are worthy. Soysal's thesis is that the decentralization of political power hardly guarantees an end to the tyrannies that push women to subaltern positions. Oya's gender criticism targets bourgeois morals as well as feudal and working-class ones. Men, in general, appear as perpetrators of a massive system of injustice in the novel. The narrator finesses Ali and exonerates him as the only male individual who, under the burden of breadwinning masculinity, tries to make a living for his family. The others, capitalist factory owners, local workers, and even the leftist revolutionary intellectuals born to the feudal culture of the region assemble in a pact of masculine privileges against women.

Soysal successfully shows that not only women of different class origins experience oppression, but men too, struggle against the prevailing definitions of power and manliness. The narration discusses, although pessimistically, means of a reform centered on reconstructing gender roles in the counter-revolutionary circles, as well as the working-class home and the revolutionary leftist movement. With an already trembled belief in the erosion of gender differences by the end of class struggles, Oya realizes the profound gap between theory and practice, and recognizes that the local conditions do not comply with theories at all. She recognizes that what she calls a theory is actually a sum of things that she has extrapolated from her own condition to the rest of womankind. In a stunning self-inspection, she discovers her engagement with a masculinized gender role

and becomes critical of her masculinization, while she also starts questioning her revolutionary ideals.

The political oppression represented by the sudden raid of police to a casual dinner meeting in Adana reaches into every corner of life in the novel. Human relationships are shown to be boasting and imprisoning. Soysal articulates her observations of the social order and the power networks enhanced by the society through a gender conscious lens. She critically engages with the notions of machismo and bourgeois feminism as well as the masculinization of women. The relationship among the state power, masculinity, and violence is one of the modes of address of the narration. Capturing the overlaps of her prison experience with her exile, Soysal dramatically delineates the struggles of an intellectual who witnessed tortured and raped victims while in prison, and whose psychological exile as a traumatized individual is further complicated by the dynamics of a real exile to a city she barely knows. The novel catches dramatic climaxes at points where Soysal pays specific interest to the social sexing, which is latent in the act of the rape of female political prisoners.

Şafak makes a big difference among its contemporaries, for it illustrates the agents of power, who perpetuate beatings and torture, as identifiable figures rather than dealing with them anonymously. The police officer Zekai and his assistant Abdullah come to the fore as violent police officers who violate the basic dignity of human beings. The narration also shows them as ordinary officers under higher orders, who have to comply with the commands of their superiors. Zekai and Abdullah stage a theater of power against each other in their daily routine as well. This masquerade humorously illustrates the abusiveness of power and how an obsession felt for it easily permeates people's lives.

Soysal examines the issue of police abuse without hysteria or hyperbole. She dramatically shows how the abuse of power creates violent beasts. However, with the clumsy and anxious image of Abdullah, Soysal also shows that she is concerned with the question whether subordinate officers can be made to pay for the crimes that they had been ordered to commit by their superiors. Oya's custody experience, her menstruation and being vulnerable to beatings, remind us that biological differences remain important when discussing gender. *Şafak* is a specific attempt to bring the intricate unity of sexual and political oppression to analytic attention, and Soysal makes it salient

that it is hard for women to meet men happily on a progressive, common agenda, in case little attention is paid to the underlying contradictions and conflicts about gender. Struggles of Oya in Adana successfully illustrate that a Marxist woman in the settings of 1970s Turkey has to carry on a war on two fronts, one against the exploitative economical system and its political supporters, and the other against sexual oppression of established powers.

GREYWOLVES AS TRAUMATIZED HEROES: FEAR FROM
THE FEMININE IN EMINE İŞİNSU'S *SANCI*

In the throes of March 12 men organized themselves into brotherhoods and defended their political positions within these bastions of masculinity. Emine İşinsu's *Sancı* is an intimate account of such bastions around the life of Ertuğrul Dursun Önkuzu, a member of the anticommunist youth movement, who had lost his life in a violent clash. İşinsu explores people's powerful dedication to ideologies and their sacrificing themselves for political causes, taking her lead from the real life experiences of Önkuzu. İşinsu is supportive of the anti-communist cause, so she openly criticizes the left. She looks at revolutionary men not simply as victims but as participants of violence and oppression. Despite its overwhelming political burden, the narration succeeds in providing a vivid panorama of the period and a poignant story of male anxieties. İşinsu negotiates the idea of the collective soul of "brotherhood," in line with the popular discourses of Turkish nationalism, and discusses the value of individual service to public interest.

Sancı is set in the intricate dynamics of imagining oneself as part of what Benedict Anderson describes as a "deep, horizontal comradeship" that constitutes the national psyche.³⁵ It questions trust in fellow citizens and "complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity" in the context of the civil-war atmosphere of March 12.³⁶ The novel's heroic rhetoric draws its power from combining two key discourses: Islam and Turkishness. İşinsu blends the

35 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 7.

36 İşinsu, *Sancı*, 2.

language of patriotic and religious sacrifice. *Sancti*'s discovery of moral wisdom in the fascist lines of this nationalistic imagination occupied my critical attention because in her attempt to challenge leftist's discourses of victimization by the state power, Işinsu visibly turns to the issue of masculinity.

In their introduction to *Nationalism and Sexualities*, Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger allude to the homosocial bonds inherent in the nationalism discussed in Benedict Anderson's work.³⁷ Nationalistic fraternities indeed invite a discussion on the homosocial form of male-to-male bonding beneath nationalism. Işinsu discusses fraternities around a "damsel in distress" trope, where she argues that leftist revolutionaries are the "false" victims of the period. In stark contrast to the images of active, sexually independent women put forth by leftist women writers, Işinsu depicts revolutionary women as victims at the hands of extremist ideologies, and in need of anticommunists' manly protection.

Biographies rest on a factual ground and voice a claim of truthfulness. Işinsu tries to make *Sancti*'s truth claim appeal to the readers and convince them that her novel delivers a more reliable account of March 12 by adding biographical details about Ertuğrul Dursun Önkuzu the focus of the narration. *Sancti* undergoes the ambivalent task of arguing that the previously published novels of March 12, which mobilized victim narratives with leftist revolutionary characters at the center, were seldom cases of truth telling. Although some other novelists from March 12 also used their personal experiences of the period in their works, Işinsu's *Sancti* stands in a relatively more trembled border between fact and fiction, due to the novel's attempt to establish solid links with the historical realities of the period and its insistent call to be read as the true story of a life with heroic proportions.

What makes *Sancti* different from the March 12 narratives analyzed so far is that the novel refers to an emasculated state power, and talks about how, in the vacuum of political stability, angry patriots had to organize themselves into fighters. *Sancti* also differentiates itself by registering the dramatic historical personages of the 1970s. Figures such as Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel, the nationalist

37 Andrew Parker et al., *Nationalisms and Sexualities* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 1–21.

politician Dündar Taşer, who was the second man of the radical-right Nationalist Action Party (MHP) after Alparslan Türkeş, and several well-known figures of the *ülküçü* movement who lost their lives in the civil-war atmosphere of the clashes, such as Süleyman Özmen, Yusuf İmamoğlu, Coşkun Karakaya, and so on, appear in the narration.

Travails of the anticommunist movement prevail in the novel. Some verbatim quotes from politicians of the time are also reproduced, such as Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel's famous remark "walking does not erode the streets" [*yollar yürümeyle aşınmaz*], which was his answer to a delegate of his party that asked for a ban on street riots in the Ankara Congress of Justice Party, on 8 November 1968. The narrative strategy of combining historical figures with fictional characters increases the feeling of realism. Işınso keeps the biographical details of Ertuğrul Dursun Önkuzu to the fullest, and pushes the central drama forward by invented characters. Real victims of the coup, Işınso argues, are poor young men from provincial towns, who hold on to Turkish traditions and Islam, and fight for the well-being of their country. Around these men, she creates a political orientation that defies easy placement along a single axis. The novel attempts to promote heroic yet sensible anticommunist masculinity with images of the death of these men at a young age.

Işınso marks the narration time with two dramatic real deaths: starting with the death of Süleyman Özmen, the novel explicitly covers a nine-month period, which comes to an end with the death of Dursun Önkuzu.³⁸ A summary of the atmosphere of March 12 serves as *Sancı*'s introduction: There is an ill-disguised state authority that watches the polarization to escalate, a police force that consoles revolutionary organizations that fuel the violence, and an indigenous group of young and brave heroes, who are dedicated to nationalistic causes and ready to die to fight this corruptness back. The opening scene of the novel pushes the readers straightaway into the midst of street clashes, which plunged Turkey into a civil war. *Sancı* opens with a scene depicting a ferocious confrontation of revolutionaries with the anticommunists in the streets of Ankara, which left several people from both sides injured. Süleyman Özmen, a member of the anti-communist youth who was murdered by gunshots, dies. The protagon-

38 Süleyman Özmen died on 21 March 1970, and Dursun Önkuzu died on 23 November 1970.

onist of the novel, Dursun, is also an anticommunist. At the funeral, Dündar Taşer, a political mentor and an important figure of the Nationalist Action Party of the time, delivers a speech that pushes Dursun into an interrogation about his individual role in the political upheavals.

Taşer's talk sets the tone of the narration in the opening pages of the novel as a lament for those who sacrificed themselves to protect their country from communism. In his speech, Taşer laments, in an epic voice, the tragic death of Süleyman Özmen at a young age:

He is a martyr, and his place is special in heaven. But we will not die anymore. We will not die anymore, on this trembling land that suffers the spasms of the new and powerful Turkey's birth. Süleyman is the last martyr of the idealists. We will not die anymore.³⁹

The word *şehid/martyr* provides an excellent summary of how fascism "combines" two key discourses, "religion and militarism."⁴⁰ Listening to these words, Dursun negotiates his position in the movement and the currency of death absorbed into a political cause.

Dursun celebrates death for the country and nation, but he calls the society into question as well. He is well aware that for most people the murder of Süleyman will be just another headline in the newspapers. Earlier, during the event that ended with the death of Süleyman Özmen, the narrator records in a low voice that ordinary people keep a considerable distance from both sides that fight in the streets, and they fail to understand their motives. The taxi driver, for example, who reluctantly takes the bleeding Süleyman to the hospital, asks them "why they keep fighting as hungry jackals in the middle of the snow."⁴¹ After the funeral, the narrator swiftly records Dursun's anger at this self-imposed neutralism. To his disappointment, nobody

39 "O şehittir, yeri şüheda katıdır. Fakat biz artık ölmeyeceğiz, bu sallanan topraklar üzerinde, doğum sancısı, yeni, güçlü, büyük Türkiye'nin sancısını çeken bu topraklar üzerinde biz artık ölmeyeceğiz. Süleyman ülkücülerin son şehididir, biz artık ölmeyeceğiz!" Işınso, *Sanıcı*, 22.

40 Georges Bataille, "The Psychological Structure of Fascism," in *Visions of Excess*, ed. Carl R. Lovitt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 137.

41 Işınso, *Sanıcı*, 6.

actually cares about the deaths: “People were passing by him. Women, children, the elderly and the young [...] He wants to stop them all and say ‘Süleyman is dead, you know?’ To say ‘You idiots! Süleyman died for you, for your children’[...]”⁴²

Dursun’s grief is then projected onto the visible political illiteracy of a bridge party, which includes Saadettin Koç, who is a Kemalist professor at the university, his wife, Sabiha Hanım, and their guests. A family squabble between Saadettin Koç and his daughter Leyla introduces Leyla’s immediate history of getting involved in some revolutionary-leftist group as a challenge to her father’s overestimating treatment of her potential. Saadettin defends neutralism in such a period, considering the safety of his family. Leyla’s fight with her father crystallizes the narrow world of the middle-class intelligentsia that is populated with self-centered and outrageously materialistic individuals. As a symbol of the political quietism and passivity of the center, Saadettin Koç refuses to take sides with any of the political counterparts that ferociously fight with one another in the streets; however, Leyla’s activism unfolds her refutation of being a decorative object in the house and “the little princess” of her father.

With Leyla, Işın introduces the revolutionaries as threats to domestic peace in their comfortable and modern middle-class situation. Fencing the idea of revolution with bourgeois-turned activists, *Sanclı* attempts to point out what Işın thinks is the major inconsistency of the leftist revolutionary movement in Turkey. Most people attached to revolutionary ideals are members of privileged classes and, therefore, they are actually far from understanding the struggles of the working class. This gap becomes the proof for the argument that their agitated working-class rhetoric is just an intellectual imitation. Introducing Leyla, who is a young woman adrift in politics, hungry for attention and also prone to jump into political action just because it is in vogue to do so, *Sanclı* opens the imitation card in the beginning of the novel.

Leyla differs distinctively from the other female figures of the novel. She is independent and aggressive, and she deliberately uses rude speech. She is characterized by arrogance and rebellion against

42 “İki yanından insanlar geçiyor. Kadınlar, çocuklar, yaşlılar, gençler... Hepsini durdurmak ‘biliyor musunuz Süleyman öldü’ demek... ‘Heyy, avanaklar, Süleyman sizler için, sizin çocuklarınız için öldü’ demek...” Işın, *Sanclı*, 27.

authority. Her “female masculinity” serves both as a feature of attraction and repulsion.⁴³ To make the contrast between Leyla and Dursun even more pronounced, İşinsu spends a considerable portion of the novel on Dursun’s history of naiveté and on the growth of a vulnerable child into a self-motivated hero. Romanticizing the notions of traditional and premodern structures in Dursun’s childhood, *Sancı* tries to build a “saga” of the rural working classes. This episode presents a picture of fascism’s close ties with the impoverished classes, and also portrays a certain type of masculinity, which can be defined by obedience to the elderly and to God, legitimate family relations, and self-sacrifice for the good of the nation.

Bourgeois capitalism appears as an enemy in the episodes of Dursun’s childhood, not as a result of a political rejection of the capitalist system, but rather as a romantic reaction against mechanization and modernity. The hospital, where the adolescent Dursun had spent some time for the treatment of a minor injury, elaborates the story of his mystic sensibility and the utopia of his will to save the poor. İşinsu portrays Dursun as a boy of compassion and self-sacrificial giving. She associates him with positions of weakness, but paradoxically, claims heroic titles for him. This is, in a way, a reproduction of the glorification of the persecuted revolutionary individuals in their silence during violent interrogations, as seen in Erdal Öz’s *Yaralısun*: although the protagonist is in a subordinate position in terms of his masculinity, he is “the real hero.”

Leyla’s little brother, Ali, who happens to have found nationalism as the proper political ground to express himself, and who is negotiating his eligibility for the anticommunist “greywolves” as a young boy, serves as the proxy that links the independent stories of Dursun and Leyla. Dursun meets Ali in one of the anticommunist riots, and he later comes across him in the street while Ali is waiting for his sister. When Leyla finally arrives, she arrogantly gazes at Dursun from head to toe and intimidates him for being a member of the anticommunists. Impressed by her beauty and self-confidence and threatened by her vigorous attack, Dursun discovers that he lacks the necess-

43 Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Jean Bobby Noble, *Masculinities Without Men: Female Masculinity in Twentieth-Century Fictions* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004).

ary self-esteem to defend his political position in front of an overbearing woman of city origin, who has all the control.

Leyla and Dursun's first encounter makes the gender problem of the novel visible by consolidating Leyla's position as "masculine" and punctuating Dursun's "femininity" via his introverted character. Leyla has the "phallus." Leyla's objectifying gaze paralyzes Dursun and prevents him from expressing himself when she arrogantly treats him like a savage animal:

"See you later, Ali!"

The little sparrow flapped and clinked its wings when he attempted to leave.

"Just a moment, hold on, are you one of Ali's commando brothers?" [...]

"Nice to meet you. I am Ali's sister. Unfortunately," she laughed, "I am not a commando" [...]

"No, no please, don't leave. I haven't seen any commando in my life. Not a greywolf either."

Dursun murmured with an inaudible voice:

"Go to a zoo then!"⁴⁴

Dursun feels attracted to Leyla and, at the same time, intimidated by her because of her unconventional manners. His retreat is built on the fear "of being swallowed, engulfed, and annihilated" by women, as noted by Barbara Ehrenreich in her foreword to Klaus Theweleit's seminal *Male Fantasies*, as the major anxiety of fascist male identity.⁴⁵

In a critique of Theweleit's work, Lynne Segal notes that fascism is not only about stiffness, that it also encourages the 'feminine' quali

44 "—Eyvallah, Ali!

Yürüyordun ki küçük serçe tekrar kanat çırpı, hem şıkır şıkır:

—Bir dakika, bir dakika, yoksa siz Ali'nin o meşhur komanda ağabeylerinden misiniz? [...]

—Memnun oldum, ben de Ali'nin ablasıyım—güldü – fakat komanda değilim [...]

—Yo, yo durun gitmeyin. Ben ...şimdiye kadar hiç komanda görmedim. Bozkurt da görmedim." Dursun belli belirsiz bir sesle mırıldandı:

—Hayvanat bahçesine gidin öyleyse!" Işın, *Sancı*, 58–59.

45 Barbara Ehrenreich, "Foreword," in Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, ix–xix.

ties CCF “obeisance, even obsequiousness.”⁴⁶ İşinsu similarly adopts a dualistic perspective and adds “feminine” traits to Dursun’s fascism. Despite the fact that he is coded with soldierly charms, Dursun is a fighter who never fired a gun. Books are central to his heroism, not weapons.⁴⁷ The narration highlights a sense of masculinity derived from intellectual sources. While some members of the anticomunist movement champion the macho ethos of armed fight, Dursun rejects the act on the basis of brute strength. He is prepared to resort to violence, but only to protect himself and his loved ones. Dursun considers himself a defender of the country against the Western ideological imports. He is a conqueror on the ideological level, but a pacifier on the level of physical action. The mute romance that develops between Dursun and Leyla also emphasizes a striking account of inaction. Dursun falls in love, but his hesitance over Leyla is complicated by the fact that Leyla is from the rival political camp.

To punctuate Dursun’s unique “chivalric” masculinity, İşinsu introduces counter masculine figures. Leyla’s meeting with Turgut, a comrade, swiftly turns into a discussion on the possible ways to achieve revolution in Turkey, negotiation of the premises of revolution, and questioning whether love is a bourgeois term. The meeting in Turgut’s house consolidates the idea that love, as an emotional term, is absent from the dictionary of the revolutionaries. In the revolutionary world, personal travails are secondary to collective struggles, and love has been replaced by a convoluted “masculine solidarity,” which makes use of women in every possible way. Turgut and Leyla’s so-called comrades cooperate in making this young woman learn the weighty lesson that she is only an object in their hands. The transformation of Leyla from a subject who directs her gaze to men and intimidates them, to an object and a powerless victim happens through an unpleasant experience of having sex with Seyhan, one of the superiors of the revolutionary group, under duress.

Seyhan arrives at Turgut’s house and sends him away to fulfill some secret duty. He then asks Leyla to have sex with him. Rape is only existent by implication, but its terror speaks through the nervous breakdown of Leyla. The elision of the act of rape is telling in

46 Lynne Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men* (London: Virago, 1990), 116–21.

47 İşinsu, *Sançı*, 371.

the sense that by the absence of any particular detail about the incident, it is left in the dark, on purpose, whether Leyla actually had resisted “enough.” Seyhan is psychotic and out of control; as a rapist, he is seemingly a threat to everyone. Threat of male rape is a silent moment in the novel, which is not expressed or developed, but it echoes in the “extremities” of Seyhan.⁴⁸ Leyla’s rape is not expressed openly, either. The details appear in the latter parts of the novel, when Leyla experiences a nervous breakdown back home, in her room. Leyla’s breakdown explicitly defines the act as rape. A nightmare communicates that it was her first sexual experience and that she actually had resisted.⁴⁹

Leyla tries to draw the image of a girl that distinguishes herself from her virginity, but she is, in fact, thoroughly influenced by her combat with her rapist. Işinsu seduces the reader for a questioning of Seyhan’s sanity and the general saneness of a political movement that keeps him in charge. In combining a dark tale of rape, which is burdened with moral lessons with the specific historical and political moment of the March 12 atmosphere, Işinsu tries to show that there is a revolutionary ideal with a “human mask,” which needs to be removed to make clear what is beneath.

The narrator makes lengthy explanations of Leyla’s earlier inaction against Seyhan’s violence and underlines her subscription to the role of a bully in order not to bring harm to the “macho role she used to play since her childhood, and that ridiculous pride of her” (*küçük-lüğünden beri takındığı kabadayılık pozu, o saçma sapan gururu*).⁵⁰ This masculine bullying causes Leyla to present herself like a fearless, even senseless person, and it also makes her look down upon the damage done to her. She acts as if she did not care at all about the loss of her virginity; she is confident that virginity does not mean anything, and her lifestyle does not lean on a definition of virtue built on chastity. The narrator punctuates the cold rationale of Leyla so enthusiastically that it is brutally suggested not to consider the event

48 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick notes that male rape is a form of danger that cannot be openly expressed in Charles Dickens’s *Our Mutual Friend* (1865). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 164.

49 Işinsu, *Sancti*, 121.

50 *Ibid.*, 133.

as rape because Leyla did not break down that powerfully. Rape actually makes Leyla grasp that she is only a young girl in the intersection of some fields of male violence and passion. She does not adopt a victim role and insists on imagining herself as a powerful agent who influences the flow of events.

The fluidity of Leyla's image between an innocent victim and a femme fatale makes it difficult for readers to relate to her. Although there is room for Leyla to break up with "the beast" and transfer herself to the good side, no salvation is foreseen for the male revolutionaries. The line drawn between political violence and psychopathic violence indicates that the motivation for political aggression is traceable to the individual psyches of the revolutionary men. The brutality is assumed to be endemic. Just like Seyhan, other revolutionary superiors introduced in the novel are abusive men, who insult Leyla and make her feel like nothing but an instrument. Their intimidating stare over her body provides the reader with a comparison between their exploitive masculinity and Dursun's chivalric masculinity. While Dursun cannot look Leyla in the eye at all, revolutionaries gaze at Leyla's body and strip her with their eyes.

In Leyla's discussions with Turgut, Seyhan, and later with Adnan and Mr. Bakof, the masterminds of the revolutionary movement, Işinsu calls attention to the inconsistencies in leftist thought by references to the split between the supporters of armed struggle against state power, defenders of political fight in or outside of parliament, and advocates of the famous National Democratic Revolution movement (Milli Demokratik Devrim, MDD), which sought help from a left-oriented military intervention to achieve a revolutionary state order.⁵¹ The narrator lambasts the opinionated members of the revolutionary thought and argues that their roots are outside. The cursory presence of Mr. Bakof in the narration gets served as proof for the unfamiliar control of the revolutionary group. Mr. Bakof, too, supports the idea that members of the revolutionary movement are inherently sexually pervert individuals, with his unremittingly arrogant voyeurism. During their short talk, he undresses Leyla with his

51 Murat Belge, under the pseudonym Ahmet Samim, summarizes the MDD project as follows: "[s]tudents would agitate, officers would strike, and a national junta would take power." See Ahmet Samim, "The Tragedy of the Turkish Left," *New Left Review* 126 (1981): 79.

eyes and reinstates her position as an erotic object. The presence of Mr. Bakof articulates another figurative rape. The narrator posits his presence as the sign of the penetration of national boundaries with the “alien” ideology of communism. The allegorical image of women as homeland shows the affiliation of national identity with women’s bodies and serves to demonize the communist cause.

The traumatized Leyla mutters in her sleep and attracts the attention of her brother Ali. Remembering his sister’s arrogant attack on Dursun earlier, Ali suspects that Dursun and his friends may have threatened his sister. Ali goes to the head office of *Devlet*, the popular nationalist journal of the time, to talk to Dursun, but he learns that he has been out of town for a week. With a little help from Dursun’s friends, who had been monitoring the members of the revolutionary clique in which Leyla was involved, Ali connects Leyla’s delirium with her being left alone with Seyhan in Turgut’s house. He starts putting pressure on his sister to make her quit the revolutionary group. The tension of the story increases as Leyla accepts her instrumental status and convinces herself to leave the movement permanently. She realizes, as Işınsu hopes her readers realize as well, that leftist revolutionism was only an irresponsible adventure.

The movement of the novel is toward Leyla’s realization that she has been an instrument to the revolutionary movement. Işınsu uses Leyla’s progress to undermine the Kemalist politics of her father as well as the revolutionary politics of her comrades, both of whom attempt to keep her in the magnetism of their own political field. Although Leyla gradually falls apart, the narration does not give her the chance of self-government. Leyla pulls herself from the magnetism of leftist thought back to the neutral center and safety of being the “little princess” of a Kemalist father. In the end, she is inescapably an object of some other man’s future plans. The narrator is derisive in the presentation of Leyla, even when she is falling apart from her revolutionary ambitions and trying to put some distance between herself and her prurient comrades. Her “masculinity” signifies how confused gender roles give rise to struggles and pain. Leyla is criticized for her attempt to override gender boundaries, as well as her attempt to escape her class identity. The narrator warns the reader that she is inescapably a princess: “She is someone who set off to find her twin, someone alone and weak, but who tries to camouflage both of these features with her pride, someone who suf-

focates because of this attempt and acts unreasonably, and then suffocates more, and acts more unreasonably. She is a... a princess!”⁵²

Leyla decides to separate from the movement, but fails to take action, fearing she will get stigmatized by her comrades. However, after she learns that Mr. Bakof had Turgut killed, Leyla finally makes up her mind. Violence in the streets reaches a new level of intensity and Saadetdin Koç decides to take his family to the United States. Leyla accepts a last assignment from the clique, where she thinks she will be killed. But she does manage to leave the country safely with her family. The novel ends as Dursun falls prey to a group of brutal revolutionaries, gets questioned, tortured, and finally dies a violent death.

Except for a few spotty anecdotes about the violent use of power by the anticommunist greywolves, *Sanclı* offers the revolutionary left as an emblem of brutality, and a vulgar and irresponsible culture distinguished by sexual pathologies. The novel lacks penetration into the inner lives of the characters; instead of private triumphs and intimate frustrations, Işınsu makes the characters act upon their ideologies and then get criticized by the narrator. The narrator formulates critical conclusions, theories, and moral statements to digest, and is hardly the voice of an objective reporter. A sense of repetitiveness pervades the novel, because both Dursun and the narrator reiterate similar points touched in the speech at the beginning of the novel by Dündar Taşer. Reiteration of similar points by many becomes a powerful proof of “the truth,” contradicting the novel’s earlier critique of leftist ideological “parroting.”

As Cynthia Enloe notes, militarism is a social process, not only a matter of war.⁵³ It is interesting to observe the eradication of the dividing line between military and civil in *Sanclı* as Işınsu explores the extension of militarized values to presumably “civil” lives, focusing on political fraternities. However, the historiography of *Sanclı* is narrowly selective in the elements of Turkish nationalism on which it focuses. With the simple magician’s trick of misdirection, it diverts readers’ attention away from anticommunists who killed, to anticom-

52 “Kız çiftini aramak için yollara düşen, yalnız ve aciz ve iki özelliğini de gururu ile örtmeye çalışan, bu yüzden bunalıp saçmalayan, sonra daha da çok bunalan, daha çok saçmalayan bir... bir prenses!” Işınsu, *Sanclı*, 213.

53 Cynthia Enloe, “Feminists Thinking About War, Militarism, and Peace,” in *Analyzing Gender: A Handbook of Social Science Research*, eds. Beth B. Hess and Myra Marx Ferree (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1987), 527.

munists who were murdered. It ignores the violence perpetuated by the members of the fascist militia, “ülkücüs” or “commandos” as they refer to themselves, and equates the movement tout court to a naïve guardianship metaphor.

Sanclı is tainted with the anticommunist project to win victim status and, ironically, it relies on the same kind of gratification that it tries to debunk. It praises the predominantly lower-middle class, conservative, and reactionary (anticommunist) masculinities in the same way as some leftist writers tend to praise revolutionaries. Işınsu writes with an urge to warn pliant young people about the spurious claims and decadent manners of the leftist revolutionary thought. She finds the nationalist causes betrayed by them and also by the cowardice and political complacency of the so-called neutrals. Işınsu lightheartedly overlooks the violence committed by anticommunist paramilitary groups since the early 1970s and the harsh measures of the military coup that followed. It sees the pressures of totalitarianism only in the revolutionary leftist movement and fails to make a critique of the totalitarian logic.

Since all the sexual undercurrents throughout the novel have been mobilized in the presence of pathetic leftist revolutionaries, Dursun’s attraction to Leyla never gets expressed as an erotic attraction. It rather stays in the realm of fantasies, since Dursun forces himself to resist the bodily temptations of the world. In light of vulgar essentialism and the fairy-tale characterization of “the goods” and “the evils,” it will not be oversimplifying to say that principal characters who symbolize the malaise of revolutionism are derived from extremes and pathologies, in order to stigmatize the leftist ideology.

However, the thing that really distinguishes *Sanclı* from the other novels explored so far is that it is a practical threat on the reader. Instead of saying “neither–nor” *Sanclı* argues that everybody must recognize a political “either–or” and take a political stand. The disdaining voice of the narrator, who finds hypocrisy even in the fears of ordinary people who are afraid of being caught in the crossfire between the revolutionaries and the greywolves, makes one think that anybody who is not willing to fight side by side with the anti-communists against the “malaise” is considered as an enemy to this collective soul. There is a public rendered powerless by vicious forms of repression, but *Sanclı* ignores this and blames people with inaction and not showing enough attention to political causes. It argues that

remaining a patriot is possible only by serving the country in a certain destructive way in the atmosphere of the civil war. Within the lament *Sancti* voices, there is an intriguing, though quiescent, set of ideals that can assume a volatile political character.

FRIEND OR FOE: REVOLUTIONARY MEN AS HUSBANDS
AND VALENTINES IN PINAR KÜR'S *YARIN YARIN*

Problems of militancy and political activism were recurring themes in March 12 novels, since writers were involved in similar situations in their personal lives, in a period when the ideological polarization of the country divided families into camps.⁵⁴ Pınar Kür's *Yarın Yarın* is built on a love affair that blossoms in a historical moment when the relations of militaristic and political forces predominate, and reflects on the real historical events associated with the political movements of 1970. The novel explores the dynamics of domination and subjugation in erotic relationships and questions men and women's capacity to make liberating decisions. Kür questions subordinating women's identities to those of their husbands and examines the nature of civil society. *Yarın Yarın* includes detailed observations of the bourgeois life in 1970s Turkey as different from the novels analyzed so far. Kür offers an insightful consideration of the bourgeois upper-middle to upper-class lives, which are economically privileged and bereft of any hardships. She also deals with the dilemma of quietism. *Yarın Yarın* presents a story that discusses the cultural significance of adultery and includes graphic sex scenes from the female protagonist's point of view. Kür's desire to challenge the male monopoly of writing about sex and relationships with such explicit discourses was unique in the political climate of the 1970s and had far-reaching consequences.⁵⁵

Yarın Yarın yields different stories of transformation that negotiate gender. Unlike pioneering March 12 novels that focus on men

54 Emine Işınsu and Pınar Kür are cousins on their mothers' side, who found themselves, by the time the military intervened, on opposite sides of the political clash.

55 At the height of the September 12 coup in 1980, *Yarın Yarın* was banned for four years on the grounds of obscenity.

victimized by the state, Kür's novel points to a crisis of masculinity already inherent to the "social relationships" of men that are constituted through "difference."⁵⁶ With every act men negotiate their position in the power hierarchy, therefore, each moment can be a time of crisis. Her critique targets institutions such as family and monogamy, challenging their accepted meanings. *Yarın Yarın* is primarily concerned with analyzing the exercise of masculine power, but Kür also occupies herself with analyzing women's apparent acquiescence to it. She casts a critical eye at the complicity of the so-called "victims" of domination in their own victimization. Kür illustrates the female appropriation of domination, oppression, and pain, and shows that it is necessary to consider individuals within their complicated network of relationships, in order to fully grasp the reasons beneath their tendencies to become dominant over others.

In *Yarın Yarın*, power hierarchies are inherent to human relationships without any ideological content. Kür portrays both working-class and bourgeois families in Lévi-Straussian triangles where women appear as "means of alliance between men."⁵⁷ The novel draws a parallel between self-discovery and the awakening of political consciousness by means of an implicit analogy between the personal turmoil of sexual awakening and the collective turmoil of the events in 1970s Turkey. It portrays the social forces and institutions surrounding the individuals, their power to influence the lives of men and women, and the interaction of the individual with others in collective identities.

The novel focuses on the love affair between Selim Ersoylu, a revolutionary student, who took a break in his graduate studies in Paris and returned to Turkey to join his comrades in the wake of the events of the 1970s, and Seyda Caner, an unhappy wife and mother who feels trapped in the web of her husband's bourgeois friends. The major narration of *Yarın Yarın* is settled in Istanbul, but the novel also marks references to Selim's former life in Paris. The environments depicted in the first parts of the novel are typical of high-class

56 David S. Gutterman, "Postmodernism and the Interrogation of Masculinity," in *The Masculinities Reader*, eds. S. Whitehead and F. Barrett (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 62.

57 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 65.

living, such as city clubs, pavilions, mansions, hotels and so on, but the story opens with contrasting scenery, where Selim observes a poor neighborhood in Istanbul when he arrives back in his hometown. It is deftly illustrated, by means of the opening scene, that the worlds of the privileged and the underprivileged are distinctly different, and the line separating them is easily recognizable.

In his trip to the dark alleys of Beyoğlu, locals consider Selim a foreigner, confirming the rigid divide. Selim sits in a teahouse and tries to become a member of the underclass by not caring about hygiene and having a “drink that could have been contaminated by any type of fly and filth” (içine her türlü sineğin, pisliğin bulaşmış olabileceği bir içecek).⁵⁸ His irritation from the dirt underlines Selim’s class difference.⁵⁹ One of the locals asks Selim if he is from Istanbul: “They asked him only one question. Did you come from Istanbul? This was a question similar to ‘Are you from Europe, or America?’ or even ‘Are you from the moon?’ How come that somewhere that near to Beyoğlu can be so far from Istanbul? In order not to increase the gap between him and the men, he decided not to ask the name of the quarter. He said ‘I was wandering around.’”⁶⁰ Selim thinks that he may not be able to escape being considered as bourgeois, an alien passer-by, no matter how hard he rejects his privileges and tries to adjust himself to the conditions of the lower-class lives.

Selim’s in-betweenness is further complicated with the introduction of Seyda, the protagonist of the novel. Selim is a distant relative of Oktay, Seyda’s husband, and has seen neither him nor Seyda since their wedding ceremony, which was the last gathering of the whole family five years ago. The narrator recalls Selim’s earlier crush on Seyda, introducing the tensions of a longstanding and unfulfilled affection in the narration. Oktay is a promising businessman who is

58 Kür, *Yarın Yarın*, 19.

59 The problem of hygiene makes a noteworthy appearance in *Yarın Yarın*, just like it did in Erdal Öz’s *Yaralımsın*. See Erdal Öz’s use of hygiene as an index of forwardness/backwardness in *Yaralımsın*, Chapter 1.

60 “Bir tek soru sormuşlardı ona: ‘İstanbul’dan mı geldiniz?’ Avrupa’dan, Amerika’dan hatta Ay’dan mı geldinizcesine bir soruydu bu. Peki ama Beyoğlu’nun bunca yakınında bulunduğu bu yer İstanbul’dan böylesine uzak mıydı ki? Aradaki yabancılığı daha da çoğaltmamak için mahallenin adını sormaktan kaçınıyordu. ‘Dolaşıyordum da’ demişti.” Kür, *Yarın Yarın*, 20.

having an affair with the famous actress Aysel Alsan. When all these characters meet in a club late at night, we find a chance to learn their personal histories. Selim and Seyda exchange a few looks and dance for a while, but do not talk much that night. Their meeting is eclipsed by Seyda's disgust with the false virtues of bourgeois life and her self-imposed solitude thereof, in the middle of a crowded group of friends and colleagues of her husband.

The club provides a meeting point for two separate stories that advance in different directions: one, Seyda and Oktay's alienation toward each other as a couple and Seyda's becoming attracted to Selim, and second, Aysel Alsan's controversial fame and Oktay's strong attraction to her, which is terminated at the end of the novel by Aysel's marriage to another rich businessman. Throughout the first plot, Oktay's bourgeois upper-middle-class masculinity is examined and contrasted to Selim's politically engaged revolutionary masculinity. This is a symbolic clash of economical classes as well as a clash of masculinities. With the second plot, the masculinities of Aysel's oppressive and violent father, her greedy customers, her boss Haluk, the famous gay haute couture stylist and his misogynist partner, come to the forefront. In terms of their relationships with women and other men, these masculinities illustrate the climate of social interactions in 1970s Turkish society. Their tastes, manners, collective words, and misconceived standards of masculinity sketch how they built their senses of self through an arrogant negotiation of the feminine.

The dinner shows how rich families unite in a world of shallowness and luxury, in the minefield of great economic inequality. The decadence of those in a financially secure world provides hints about Seyda and Oktay's relationship. Oktay is from a wealthy family and represents a very traditional model of masculinity; he considers himself the owner of Seyda and their son Gil, as he is the financial provider. Seyda is caught in opulent inaction and lives on Oktay's resources because of a stale marriage contract. The atmosphere of the dinner party implies that finding exciting antidotes to stale marriages is normal and Seyda will not be judged, in the case she decides to end her silent and undefined longing and to transgress her wedding vows.

Anxiously waiting for his mistress to arrive at the party, Oktay observes Seyda's ignorance of the men interested in her. His con-

trolling gaze unveils the narrow regime of patriarchy and shows how Oktay relegates his wife to the status of property. In Oktay's vision a Lévi-Straussian definition of marriage becomes salient: a marriage, in this vision, "is not established between a man and a woman, where each owes and receives something, but between two groups of men, and the woman figures only as one of the objects in the exchange, not as one of the partners between whom the exchange takes place."⁶¹ Although already alienated from Seyda, Oktay keeps an eye on his wife as if she is an object owned and therefore should be protected by him:

He turned his eyes to the men sitting at the two sides of Seyda. Filled with loathing, he examined each one of them. He knew very well the filth passing the minds of these men, together with whom he once used to go school and chase women. Does Seyda not really recognize how these bastards look at her, how they grin at her flippantly? Why does she not furrow her brows—she certainly knew how to frown—and end all this impudence? Who does she think will take her spectacle of not understanding, not knowing, being unaware of her environment?⁶²

Kür portrays the male gaze, as Laura Mulvey termed it, as a virtual hegemony.⁶³ Having the destructive nature of the male gaze questioned by a man, who knows how other men are looking at his wife, and who is bound to measure his own masculinity by his reaction to his wife's being an object of desire of other men, Kür positions how masculinity settles in a double-bind.

61 Lévi-Strauss, *Elementary Structures*, 115.

62 "Gözlerini Seyda'nın iki yanında oturan adamlara çevirdi. İğrenerek onları süzdü birer birer. Birlikte okuduğu, zamanında birlikte çapkınlığa çıkmış olduğu bu adamların kafasından geçen pislikleri kendi kafasının içindekilerce iyi bilirdi. Heriflerin kendisine nasıl baktıklarını, nasıl sulu sulu güldüklerini gerçekten görmüyor muydu Seyda? Neden kaşlarını çatıp da-peki iyi bilirdi kaşlarını çatmasını- bir son vermiyordu bu yılışıklıklara? Kime yutturuyordu yani, o hiçbir şey anlamaz, bilmez, çevresinden habersiz görünüşünü?" Kür, *Yarın Yarın*, 38.

63 Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 6–18.

Here the gaze is a metaphor for power. The commodity status attached to the female body helps to produce the hegemonic masculinity of the husband. Paradoxically, Oktay confirms Seyda's position as an object, but at the same time, he expects his wife to be a volitional and acting subject, disdaining and refusing the men who approach her. Taking her lead from the materialist base-superstructure model, Kür also shows how this double-bind is fashioned by capital. Passages that recall Oktay's past are described abundantly with images of wealth, for instance, his bachelor apartment, sports car, American bar, and so on, which contribute to his charismatic masculinity.⁶⁴ It is clear that his wealth is what makes Oktay predestined to occupy the role of the master. We learn that Seyda, while making her hasty marriage to him, was lured as much by his wealth as by any feelings she had for Oktay. This alerts us to Seyda's identity, the ambivalence and uncertainty of which obscures a single definition of her goals in marrying Oktay. Seyda remembers, she was once astonished by the very peculiarities of Oktay that she now dislikes. As her love for Oktay gradually leads to her subjugation, Seyda recalls that she accepted the subservient position of wife and mother and now has turned into a frail and dependent woman who believes her reason for existence was the bearing of her son, Gil.

Although he does not love her anymore, Oktay is vulnerable to the possibility that Seyda may claim power at some point in her life and abandon him. Oktay's terror reveals an anxiety about masculinity, because he is fully aware that a promiscuous wife will make him a cuckold. The narrator records how his anxiety grows as Oktay sees the development of Seyda's subjectivity:

Oktay was to ask Aysel for a dance again when he recognized that his wife was looking at something above his left shoulder, totally fascinated. He was startled. That was the first time he saw Seyda looking at something in such an engrossed, admiring, spellbound manner. He felt quite frightened. A woman like Seyda could only look in this manner at a bomb about to be exploded or a savage animal ready to attack or... He swiftly turned his head. Looked behind over his left shoulder. At the

64 Kür, *Yarın Yarın*, 23, 92.

same time, he recognized some other people also turned that way and a silence dominated the table.⁶⁵

Selim approaches the table and interrupts the Mulveyian economy of male gaze, where the owner of the look penetrates and therefore objectifies the outside world. His look is tender, attentive, and inviting rather than objectifying, as Kür intends him to be a positive hero. Here, Selim is introduced as an unconventional man, who despises a social system that makes women powerless objects, by his challenging the established version of male vision.

After this first meeting, the narrator turns into a critical purveyor of other power-hungry male stereotypes and shifts the discussion to Aysel Alsan's encounters with masculine power. Family as an institution becomes a key discussion in Aysel's story. Verbal and physical violence sketch the image of Aysel's father, Dündar efendi, a retired gendarmerie officer who assumes his home to be a precinct. Dündar efendi creates a destructive power at home. He manages his wife and three daughters from the position of an aggressive king. After her beauty contest affair is discovered, her father beats Aysel almost to death and sends her away. From a domestic violence standpoint, Aysel's story evolves into sexual abuse; a promising haute couture designer, Haluk, discovers her and directs Aysel toward a new career. Haluk invites Aysel into the house he shares with his partner, Tarık, who does not feel the need to disguise his hatred of women.

Going backward in time, we learn how Aysel participated in a beauty contest as a teenager, got rejected and abandoned by her conservative family when she appeared in the headlines, and took shelter with a young stylist named Haluk. Haluk and his partner, Tarık, sell Aysel to a wealthy businessman from Adana, who is willing to pay a fortune to have sex with a virgin. The gay couple is an emblem reminding us that knowledge and location of social relationships can

65 "Oktay Aysel'i ikinci kez dansa kaldırmaya hazırlanmaktaydı ki, karısının ağzı açık ayran budalası gibi, kendi sol omzunun üstünden bir yerlere bakmakta olduğunu gördü. İrkildi. Seyda'nın böyle dalgın, böyle hayran, böyle büyülenmiş gibi baktığını ilk kez görüyordu. Korktu bayağı. Seyda gibi bir kadın ancak patlamak üzere olan bir bombaya bu türlü bakabilirdi, ya da saldırmak üzere olan yırtıcı bir hayvana, ya da ...Hızla çevirdi başını. Sol omzunun üstünden arkaya baktı. Aynı anda birkaç kişinin daha o yana döndüğünü ve sofradaki seslerin sustuğunu ayımsadı." Kür, *Yarın Yarın*, 51.

change the presupposed value of identities.⁶⁶ Haluk and his partner share a similarly hegemonic status with men against Aysel. The sale of her indicates that their peripheral status in the power hierarchy as gay men does not make Haluk and Tarik supporters of women's causes. They do not constitute an exception to regarding females as commodities.

Gender, as Michael Kimmel notes, is relational and cannot be viewed as two homogenous categories.⁶⁷ Although Kür seems to equate all men, gay or straight, as "consumers of women" in the beginning of the novel, she gradually moves into a class/ideology-based criticism of gender, which in the latter parts of *Yarın Yarın* make working class/revolutionary masculinities appear more sympathetic toward women's liberation. The businessman from Adana, in this sense, is an extreme symbol that speaks of the power of capital to reduce everything and everyone to exchangeable value. The violent encounter of Aysel with the Adana businessman is a symbolic reproduction of the rampant consumerism and self-interest of capitalism that turns, just like everything else, women into commodities. His being from Adana carries another social commentary: this provincial town, known for its feudal social order, which is proficiently illustrated in Sevgi Soysal's *Şafak*, appears as a dystopia for women and a realm of macho masculinity. The "Adana guy," the epitome of rich but mannerless men, brings an entire economical history that produced local men of power, who worship money, and who define their power with their money. In the novel, he is the personification of inequalities created by years of ruthless capitalism.

Aysel's night with the businessman depicts a sorrowful rite of passage characterized by violence. It is not only about a young girl being harassed and raped, but also a presentation of a destructive and vulgar masculinity, which is suggested to exist beneath the capitalist system. In the image of the "Adana guy," violence and rape are shown as the inevitable associations of the feudal-minded men's horizons:

66 Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 158.

67 Michael Kimmel, "The Contemporary Crisis of Masculinity in Historical Perspective," in *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies*, ed. H. Brod (Winchester: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 122.

Aysel tumbled supine on the bed. Afterward, it was a nightmare, much more than a nightmare, a sequence of the deepest of suffering. Because lights were on, and Aysel was deprived of sleep, which even in the worst nightmare reminds one to be somewhere outside of a plausible reality. Because lights were on, and Aysel was deprived of the possibility of taking refuge in a protecting, veiling, concealing, and warm darkness when she opened her tightly shut eyes. The lights were on. Because the Adana guy was not in favor of living the night as a dream, whether a nightmare or a sweet dream. He was trying to own the little girl underneath him with all his senses, and to exploit the concrete reality until the last drop. [...] The man goes crazy after he sees the blood. [...] A moment comes that Aysel believes her vagina is filled with broken glass. Every time the Adana guy enters her, the pieces of glass cut her deeper... [...] Suddenly, unconscious of her acts and screaming, she shouts like an insane person: "Enough! Enough, I am dying!"⁶⁸

After this night, recovery for Aysel takes the form of a controlled response to the pain. She tries to rationalize rape by thinking that such a rite was necessary for her emancipation. She decides to work as a call girl, and she earns a considerable reputation in a short time. She quickly gets accustomed to the rules of the game and accepts being a commodity for mafia millionaires and hypocritical little bourgeois businessmen.

68 "Yatağa sırtüstü yuvarlandı Aysel. Ondan sonrası korkulu bir düş- korkulu düşten de öte, çok öte, çok daha derinden duyulan bir acılar dizisiydi, bitmek bilmeyen. Işıklar yanıyordu çünkü. Ve Aysel en korkulu düşte bile kişiye elle tutulur gerçeğin dışında bir yerde bulunduğunu unutturmayan uyku bulutundan yoksundu. Işıklar yanıyordu çünkü. Ve Aysel sıkı sıkı kapadığı gözlelerini açışlarında koruyucu, örtüp saklayıcı, sıcak bir karanlığı sığınmak olanğından yoksundu. Işıklar yanıyordu. Çünkü Adanalı, ister korkulu olsun, ister güzel, bir düş gibi yaşanmasından yana değildi gecenin. Elle tutulur gerçeği, altındaki ufacık, körpeçik kızı yani, tüm duyularını kullanarak kendine mal etmek, son damlasına dek sömürmek çabasındaydı. [...] Adam, hele kanı gördükten sonra çılgına dönüyor sanki. [...] Bir an geliyor, Aysel, döl yolunun cam kırıklarıyla dolu olduğuna inanıyor. Adanalı'nın her girip çıkışında biraz daha derine batıyor bu cam kırıkları... [...] Birden, ne yaptığını bilemeden, avaz avaz bağırdığını bile fark etmeden hatta, tam bir deli gibi haykırıyor. 'Yeter, yeter artık! Ölüyorum!'" Kür, *Yarın Yarın*, 220–23.

Kür does not dwell on Aysel's transformation in detail and chooses to leave the young girl's ambivalent psychology in darkness. This renders the rape narrative a climactic episode used for political purposes. Although the rape is a defining moment in her life and her experience transforms her in profound ways, Aysel does not subscribe to the role of a victim. She avoids language of trauma and accepts rape in the least psychologically damaging way possible. Exorcising her deep disgust for her father from the memories of her family, Aysel steps beyond the concerns of family life and seeks freedom in giving her body for male sexual satisfaction. By turning her abuse to a job with a promising salary, Aysel obtains her agency and claims power. Her embracing the patriarchal image of a submissive woman is, in fact, part of Aysel's hidden agenda to pursue her narrow interests for upward mobility. The poor girl from the slums of Istanbul climbs the steps to wealth and power one by one, and becomes an acclaimed actress. As she learns from appropriating the emotional burden of her experiences, it becomes easier to disavow victimhood. Aysel creates a world of denial of her abuse, concerning herself only with her imminent future. She creates a new woman out of herself, who is immune to any kind of tragedy. She reevaluates her role as victim by acknowledging her own power to hurt, a power that is a point of connection for Aysel to her father's powerful and destructive image.

In another episode of memories, Selim's earlier attraction to a young French girl becomes the focus of the narration, which through some romantic scenes from the May 1968 riots in Paris sketches an additional story of transformation. Selim meets Josette, a first-year philosophy student, at a cheap cafeteria in Paris and finds himself orbiting her, astonished by Josette's spirited dedication to the idea of revolution. The young girl tutors Selim, in the sense that she lodges the concept of class struggle in his mind and educates him about material exploitation, imperialism, and revolution. Under Josette's guidance and assistance, Selim not only experiences a kind of sexual pleasure new to him, but also learns what being a leftist revolutionary means. He more fully grasps his third world roots and starts to develop a distaste for his wealthy bourgeois family. Through her, Selim grows to spiritual and political consciousness and develops a serious interest in coming back to Istanbul. With these interlaced memories, the pieces of which are scattered throughout the entire

body of the novel, *Yarın Yarın* constructs a world in which the fates of the characters depend upon each other.

After the club dinner, Selim and Seyda get closer and find themselves in the magnetism of a love affair. Following a series of meetings, they create a world of their own and a complicated trope of their sexuality. Selim attempts to provoke leftist ideas in Seyda's mind, which in the course of their relationship coincide with a rebellion that crumbles the institutions of family and marriage. Although she understands and supports the premises of Selim's revolutionism, Seyda resists such a transformation, because she feels too frightened to escape her prison. She champions a revolution against accepted notions of identity and of one's relation to others, but hesitates to celebrate a class-based revolutionary ideal. She attempts to challenge Selim's Marxism with a childish Freudianism, arguing that the idea of revolt is related to a pathological desire for patricide. Seyda, nevertheless, transforms despite her will. She starts translating key political texts for publication for some of Selim's preferred fanzines. She becomes interested in recent political debates and subscribes to a more politically engaged role. Finding herself more and more alienated from her former bourgeois friends and their club meetings, Seyda develops a controversial revolutionary consciousness in the shadow of Selim.

Having grown up in the petty-bourgeois environment of a Kemalist family of teachers, Seyda remains in the secure world of having mainstream ideas and a mediocre life until she becomes involved with Selim.⁶⁹ She gradually turns into a woman that exists only through her love, who is happy only when she is with her lover. While her relationship with Selim changes Seyda's life, she feels that it is far from perfect. Through the development of their affair, Seyda acquiesces in Selim's ideas, but she resists turning into a woman who sacrifices herself for the ideals of revolution. Her attitude toward the revolutionary movement is ambivalent: in the beginning, she ignores

69 The Kemalist parents symbolize Kemalism's serving as the guardian ideology of Turkey. Similar to Leyla in Emine İşinsu's *Sancti*, *Yarın Yarın*'s Seyda comes to the fore as a young woman attempting to break the protective shield covering her, and claim power and agency by means of a political choice that goes beyond Kemalism. Both novels place Kemalist fathers as the ground zero in a ternary scale and explore the negative and positive states for their heroines.

the possibility of active politics, but in the course of her relationship with Selim, Seyda learns about political responsibility and defines an arena of action for herself beyond the domestic sphere. She begins to articulate her own position by expressing a political awareness. Her education and moving to create a new identity is a symbolic illustration of how political myths appealed to people in the protest world of the 1970s and placed them in collective action, making them “the political and social myths they accept.”⁷⁰

The turn in Selim’s revolutionary perspectives gives a new twist to the narration. Selim initiates contact with a leftist clique and gets involved in a plan to kidnap the son of the recognized businessman Sulhi Gebzeli, another loyal customer of Aysel Alsan, for ransom. The money will then be used to support the comrades sent to the Palestinian guerilla camps for training.⁷¹ The plan works out, and the group succeeds in kidnapping Çetin. They obtain the ransom as well. When some members of the group argue that Seyda and Oktay’s three-year-old son Gil may be their next kidnapping target, Selim reacts ferociously, finding himself troubled between his revolutionary ideals and his love for Seyda. Selim’s hostile reaction initiates a discussion in the group, about his being the descent of a wealthy bourgeois family and his revolutionary prospects. Selim’s bourgeois past is further expressed through his struggles for recognition in the revolutionary circles.

Inspired by the actual events of the conflicting factions of the leftist revolutionary movement of the times, Kür fictionalizes the debate on the authenticity of revolutionaries with bourgeois descent. The disagreement in the leftist clique about the plan of kidnapping children not only stages a clash of different class identities but also gives rise to a negotiation of different manners. During the fierce debate, it becomes clear that some members of the leftist clique are eager to subscribe to a new set of ethics and destructive politics. The divide between word-centered ethical vocations and deed-centered activities, a recurring theme in the discussion of masculinities in *March*

70 Michael McGee, “In Search of the People: A Rhetorical Alternative,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61, 1975: 235–49.

71 This kidnapping is inspired by a real event. THKO kidnapped Dr. Rahmi Duman’s fifteen-year-old son, Hakan, for ransom on 15 April 1971. They released the boy three days later, after having received the money.

12 novels, becomes visible in this clash. Kür draws attention to the ambivalent case that what is often referred to as someone's politicization may rest in a sacrifice of that person's self to the demands of a particular ideology. Selim's struggles for recognition in the leftist clique introduces to the story two very important questions, namely what politicization is, and through which ways would it appropriately be reached.

Visiting a working-class friend at his house after the debate, Selim revisits the disturbing fact that he is an outsider. He observes Memet's exaggerated efforts to comfort him in the simple settings of his shack and finds himself alerted by his marginal position in the revolutionary group. With their unconditional love, common agenda, and solidarity in overcoming the economic hardship, Memet and his wife Kadriye suggest to Selim that working-class life rests on higher values than his life. Impressed by the image of femininity represented by Kadriye, Selim imagines himself as a child, fantasizing that Kadriye is his mother, and imagining himself taking refuge in her calm, secure, and tender love. When he invites Selim to his shack for dinner, Memet tells him how he met his wife as a young girl, immaculate of politics, at the factory during the strikes. Their story reveals another transformation toward political consciousness, which once again positions a man as the guide of a woman to a higher state of mind. Memet strongly opposes Kadriye's loyalty to feudal morals and her attempts to hide herself from men. He imposes new morals with an angry voice:

How come you think that men will sit at the table and you will serve, have your dinner in the kitchen like servants? You are a member of this house... We share our life, we share everything. Why not share our table, our friends? If I bring guests to this house, they are guests of us both... You also have things to say to them, and things to hear and learn from them...⁷²

72 "Ne demek erkekler oturacak da sen hizmet edeceksin? Yanaşımlar gibi mutfakta karnını doyuracaksın? Bu evin bir kişisinin sen de... Yaşamımızı her şeyimizi paylaşıyoruz, soframızı neden paylaşmayalım? Arkadaşlarımızı neden paylaşmayalım? Ben eve konuk getiriyorsam, ikimizin de konuğu bunlar... Senin de onlara söyleyecek sözün, onlardan işiteceklerin, öğreneceklerin var..." Kür, *Yarın Yarın*, 273.

Gender union at the dinner table is a familiar metaphor used by women writers of the March 12 era to illustrate challenges faced by women at the feudal ways of thinking in provincial households.⁷³ Memet has a revolutionary vision, and his affirmation of an equality of gender at the dinner table is tightly connected to this vision. Kür, however, shows that this is, indeed, an imitation of respectable manners and that Memet is not eager to give up his role as leader.

Kadriye, who was once a traditional woman trying to seclude herself when around men, changes due to counseling from Memet. Later, when Memet prides himself on this transformation, his words shed light on his degrading ideas about women. Giving his wife Kadriye as an example, Memet argues that socialism can be possible because there is a chance that its premises will be understood “in case things are told in a certain way even to the most ignorant and silly person” (en bilgisizine, en akli ermezine bile yolu yordamıyla bir şeyler anlatılırsa).⁷⁴ Memet’s beliefs of his wife’s “learned” capacity to imagine, think, and decide makes an ambivalent revolutionary out of Kadriye. Memet feels proud of his wife, but he gives her as an example of being able to understand the premises of socialism from the position of ignorance and foolishness. This is another example of not being able to escape from one’s roots. It echoes the ambivalence that sprinkles other characters in this novel with inconsistencies. The Adana guy becomes a businessman and earns vast amounts of money, but he lacks cultural maturation and continues to be a violently feudal man. Selim attempts to subscribe to a revolutionary masculinity, but he carries within himself the burden of being of bourgeois descent and tastes. Seyda regrets being a wife owned by Oktay, but she enthusiastically celebrates being a wife owned and appropriated by Selim. Kür rambles through the same maze-like paths again and again, and gives the message that the realities of people are made up of contradictions.

The love triangle central to the novel leads to a bizarre confrontation of the objectifying husband Oktay and the seemingly emancipating lover Selim. Following the two bourgeois women,

73 See how Sevgi Soysal in *Şafak* depicts gender-based divisions in Adana with a similar situation.

74 Kür, *Yarın Yarın*, 274.

Seyda and Aysel, in their interconnected web of relations and adding the working-class wife Kadriye into the picture, Kür principally examines the difficulties inherent to self-definition in women's experiences. But while dealing with the struggle of self-agency in the women's domain, masculinity is evidently another important focal point for her. Kür draws different images of masculinity, all of which somehow embrace the idea of the male as the constructor of the female. Oktay, the decadent bourgeois man, is captured in erotic thoughts and corrupt sexual affairs, while Memet emerges as the ideal working-class man, who works and takes care of his family and carries the responsibility of being the "head" of the household. Paradoxically, both men are introduced as the creators of their wives. Selim symbolizes a state of transition between these two images of masculinity. On the one hand, he has a wealthy bourgeois past like Seyda's husband Oktay, and on the other hand, he tries to become a working-class revolutionary like Memet.

The main focus of the stories of Aysel and Seyda is how the sense of masculine identity exuded by Seyda's husband Oktay, Aysel's father, the wealthy Adana guy, and the gay couple Haluk–Tarık finds expression in an ownership role. The male domination at home and the possibility of buying a girl's virginity with money suggests an intrinsic link between patriarchy and capitalism. Kür adds a third dimension to this link: she questions the position of leftist revolutionary men with liberal tendencies for gender equality in a world ruled by the cooperation of patriarchy with capitalism. The revolutionary figures of *Yarın Yarın* are in some sense different from the bourgeois and feudal men characterized by their obscenities. But the revolutionaries and the bourgeois men have in common their ownership role of women. This leaves the readers with the challenge of differentiating between domination as a class dependent ideological issue and as a gender issue.

Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu notes how men are "dominated by their domination" and how masculinity can cause problems for men.⁷⁵ In *Yarın Yarın*'s panorama of masculinities, two men appear as extraordinary images of Bourdieu's thought: Selim, the bourgeois-

75 Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 69.

turned-revolutionary, and Memet, the worker who happens to become the epitome of revolutionary masculinity in Selim's vision. These men are among the enlightened figures of the novel who notice the current situation that guarantees the economic comfort of a small minority over the poverty and suffering of the vast majority. In addition to their political consciousness, Selim and Memet also seem to differ from other men in their treatment of women. They are different, because they believe that women should be strong, politically conscious, and self-governing, or they seem to believe so, at first glance.

With such images of leftist revolutionary males, *Yarın Yarın* questions if adapting socialism is a panacea for the unequal distribution of power in the male–female binary, and whether it can challenge the ownership, which seems to be a feature almost naturally present in the image of masculinity. In contrast to the other male figures in the narrative, both Selim and Memet make their first appearances as men who treat women as subjects. With Selim, Kür personifies a special type of revolutionary masculinity with chivalric charms, but the idea of a chivalric man as the protector of women is always presented with some irony. In the overall picture, what she does is demythologizing the leftist revolutionary hero without debasing him. Kür credits the attempt to transform the country into a site for social justice, but does not let Selim's manufactured revolutionism go unnoticed.

Seyda never discovers Selim's links to the underground revolutionaries, although she suspects that he is involved in some unlawful acts. When the military seizes power, everything changes overnight. Learning that a member of his revolutionary group was an informant, Selim decides to flee from Istanbul. He disappears after a last visit to Seyda, leaving her terrified and in torment, filled with curiosity. In a few weeks, Seyda and Oktay see a photograph of Selim's dead body in the newspaper, which also announces Aysel Alsan's marriage to Sulhi Gebzeli in the headlines. Seyda experiences an emotional breakdown in front of her husband. She becomes hospitalized, and Oktay is taken into custody later that night by a group of officers that enter the house looking for Seyda and any documents that will prove her link to Selim. In the police station, Oktay denies having any information of Selim's connection to the underground groups or about his intimate relationship with Seyda. When released,

he takes Seyda and their son to Switzerland, and they return to Turkey years later. In the end, Seyda finds herself in the same web of relations with people whose company she previously disdained, trying to manage to live with her psychological trauma.

Yarın Yarın is an intriguing novel that portrays women's struggle not to be defined and limited by the expectations of others and their desperate need for recognition. While immersing its readers first in the patriarchal oppression of a woman in her unhappy marriage and then her submission to a man who draws her into a passionate love affair, *Yarın Yarın* explores the grounds for sexual, political, and social liberation. Kür challenges taken-for-granted discourses about sexual moralities, marriage and family, and provocatively inserts certain elements of sexual liberation into the leftist agenda. While examining the consequences of sexual awakening and the nascent rite of passage to adulthood, the novel also casts a critical eye on the infrastructure of being in political turmoil, where men and women search for love and recognition in spite of the struggles surrounding them.

Described in unabashed and explicit detail, Seyda's youthful curiosity about sex and her first sexual awakenings with her husband Oktay illustrate the transformative power of erotic desire. Seyda's rediscovering herself with Selim constitutes another level of transformation. Her love for Selim makes Seyda a different person. It emancipates her from a destructive marriage by inducing a powerful sexual desire and a will for renewal. Kür makes a difference among the March 12 novelists by letting "the wives" of the revolutionaries speak. In contrast with the other writers, who depict the turmoil of the period with little reference to family relations of the individuals engaged in militant political action, Kür turns to the intimate relationships of the households. She gives voice to a woman who finds her orderly world turned upside down because of a young leftist revolutionary. The lovers' emotional as well as political struggles propel the book along: Seyda's extraordinary loneliness gets transformed into a growing political awareness, but it fails to catch sheer individualism.

In the novel, being apolitical is treated as a feature that introduces a threat to the platform of understanding, since it motivates people to think individually. However, it is also the case that blind devotion to any political cause can easily turn someone into a pris-

oner of ideological conditioning. *Yarın Yarın* does not advocate class alliances or revolution, but it dramatizes the capitalism-driven life, negotiating the possible ways of understanding among people of different class identities and political engagements. The novel does not mean to resolve the dilemma of gender inequality in favor of the male or female; rather, it aims to develop a critical practice that is mindful of both. Although Kür makes extensive use of the romantic tradition of hatred towards the bourgeoisie, she also shows that such hatred turns into a false key in the case of Turkish socialism, where the revolutionary movement is populated principally by people of the upper classes, as symbolized by the struggles of Selim. The narration presents feudalism and the bourgeoisie with a decadent masculinity, which sees women as objects and is characterized by sexual hunger and violence. Both Oktay and the Adana guy use women to achieve and keep their sense of superiority. The novel presents the revolutionaries with an alternative masculinity, which sees women as companions, but makes the companionship rest on leadership ethos, if not on ownership ethos.

Yarın Yarın is a powerful and gripping story that digs behind the relationships of love, the institution of marriage, and a group of people attached to a changing world, who find themselves in a complicated war during the chaotic atmosphere of March 12. It is an exploration of decision-making and of the idea of love as a liberator from social oppressions. The novel reflects tensions felt both in love and ideologies, and does not advocate one over the other or argue for a particular solution. Kür examines adultery while questioning the possibility for a “new world” where the superiority of passion as a source of moral behavior over the formal rules of society and religion is acknowledged by people. The array of masculinities marshaled in the novel as “superior” powers indicate that bonds of dominance and subordination define the relationships of women to men. The novel skillfully documents that Seyda’s relationship with Selim eventually settles in a power hierarchy. It shows elegantly that revolutionary men, too, attempt to appropriate women. In this sense, Pınar Kür’s *Yarın Yarın* can be considered as an extension to Sevgi Soysal’s *Şafak*, which questions if leftist revolutionary masculinities can automatically be positioned as anti-authoritarian allies of women in the fierce fight with fascism.

EMASCULATED BY MODERNITY: CLASH OF RURAL AND URBAN
MASCULINITIES IN SEVİNÇ ÇOKUM'S *ZOR*

Sevinç Çokum's *Zor* (Hard) revolves around the problem of migration to cities and the transformation from feudal to commercial society.⁷⁶ Although it is labeled as a novel, *Zor* is a hybrid form of the genres of novel and short story. It does not present the reader with a main story of a well-developed character that guides the whole narration. The focus of the novel shifts from one person to another and makes different voices heard. The importance of *Zor* is its attempt to reach beneath the political upheavals of March 12, taking its lead from the intersection of discourses of masculinity with provincial, class, and generational identities. The novel mentions political clashes that characterize the 1970s, but it also makes a civil war between rural and urban cultures visible, by focusing on a child worker's attempts to obtain a place in the men's network in the city. Çokum is an open anticommunist, but in contrast to Emine Işınsu, she does not limit her characters to rival political camps in *Zor*. With more careful political balancing, she gives voice to a bulk of people whose lives cut across regional, class, and religious lines.

As Michael Kimmel points out, hegemonic masculinity not only involves men dominating women, but also men exerting power over other men.⁷⁷ *Zor* revolves around the difficult problem of distinguishing the real strength of man in this fight: is the worth of masculinity measured by physical strength, fighting, and drinking or by ethics, sincerity, and loyalty? The protagonist of the novel is a child worker, who searches for wealth and freedom in the city. Çokum sheds light on the lives of ordinary people by exploring the development of a boy of peasant origin toward adolescence, in an atmosphere surrounded by financial troubles. The novel opens with a casual dinner scene in an unidentified village in Anatolia. It introduces the elderly Zühre nine, his son, daughter-in-law, and grandson Kerim, and accelerates with the family's decision to send Kerim to Istanbul. There he will be an apprentice to a skilled worker, which is expected to help him in the future to find a job that pays a living wage. Kerim

76 Sevinç Çokum, *Zor* (Istanbul: Türk Edebiyatı Vakfı Yayınları, 1978).

77 Michael S. Kimmel, *The History of Men: Essays on the History of American and British Masculinities* (Albany: State University of New York, 2005).

leaves his grandmother, mother, and unhappily wed sister Sirma behind and comes to Istanbul. He takes shelter in the house of his aunt Hatice, who contacts a few friends to secure him a temporary job in an iron atelier. Kerim's story develops with brief episodes from the lives of other people with whom he comes across in Istanbul. Kerim's struggle for acceptance into the urban masculinity both fascinates and intimidates him, and the people around him notice his dilemma.

The difficulty of forming a consistent whole of a group of people with different beliefs provides the novel with its central metaphor and title. Kerim becomes a secondary character at times when the plot shifts to track the struggles of people around him. Cameos of some other minor characters also interfere. These stories do not link to each other, but rather depict a variety of versions of the events that characterize a specific historical period from diverse perspectives. There are multiple personalities in the book, gendered and classed, and the multi-vocality of the narration addresses the idea that it is hard to live together when individuals have different ideological orientations and beliefs. Although it seems that the narrative seeks to demystify the idea of an absolute truth by giving voice to a series of different characters, it gradually falls into a vulgar criticism of leftist revolutionism.

The logorrhea of characters creates a world of signs. The characters (a peasant boy, middle and upper-middle-class intellectuals, workers, teachers, students, the urban poor) depict a broad picture of the common realities of the martial law period. There are all kinds of socializing forces present in the text, from sibling interaction to other dealings one encounters with parents, the elderly, peers, and teachers. By discussing events from their own point of view, each character provides implicit comments about the political polarization that paralyzed the society in 1970. *Zor* contains references to the worsening socio-political climate of Istanbul, in between the successive minor plots that describe the characters' individual stories. People talk about crimes and kidnappings, and about a type of anarchism that has taken over the city. Choosing certain real-life details and leaving certain others behind, *Zor* points out at violence born out of the irresponsible behaviors of the leftist revolutionaries, who are loafers to their rich families' chagrin.

The story takes place in an anonymous time marked with street tussles and chaos, until a hint is given to the current time by means

of an extra-diegetic event: the murder of an anticommunist student, Yusuf İmamoğlu, who was murdered at the University of Istanbul on 8 June 1970. *Zor* maintains the tradition of registering the dramatic historical events of the 1970s as a tactic to reinforce the reality effect of the narration. Another such reference is the kidnapping of Ephraim Elrom, the Israeli Consul General of Istanbul in May 1971. In the narration, references to specific events punctuate the atmosphere of fear and chaos that laid siege to many cities by the early 1970s. Except for these two references, there are not any further details that can establish an objective chronology for the text. Although the narration attempts to give a higher degree of realism, it is stingy as it disseminates details about time and place. *Zor*'s shift from one character to another makes the political sympathies of the narration difficult to determine, but as the story develops, the cross-currents in the narration strongly indicate a dislike of class-based politics and sexual liberation.

Zor opens with the pressing demands of rural life uttered by Kerim's grandmother, Zühre nine. The elderly woman speaks of the hard times she experienced, of the wars and the material difficulties, which burdened her life in the village. Her recollections introduce the local context which has shaped young Kerim: as a country boy, Kerim's struggles illustrate an agrarian life with limited resources, hard work, and poverty, which draw young men away from their villages into the big cities with a desire for upward mobility toward higher classes. Despite the hardships, the verdant village life is romantically associated with peace and security. Çöküm provides images of a preindustrial and glorified nature setting. The city in *Zor*, however, is the exact opposite. It has an uncanny atmosphere where social ties are weakened, people are alienated from each other, distrust hinders trust in relationships, and anarchy reigns.

In her influential ethnography *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society*, Carol Delaney notes that a creative God is considered masculine in Turkey, but also men are said to give life, while women only give birth.⁷⁸ Born into such a glorified "peasant masculinity," Kerim is privileged when compared with

78 Carol Delaney, *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 27.

children, and who is seen as a slavish household worker within the conservative values of village life. Unable to conceive, Sirma finds herself useless in the village. She hopes to join Kerim in the city and start a new life, surrounded by more productive economic opportunities. Her struggles indicate that there is an asymmetrical gendering directed at men and women in the feudal conditions of village life. We witness, in Sirma's story, how men come to the fore as superior agents of power. In *Zor*, Çokum adopts a constructionist position against gender but, paradoxically, she is also into biological essentialism: on her account, biological essentialism explains the difference between men and women, while constructionism makes different masculinities and femininities visible. The performance of masculinity varies not just between men, but within a single man, as his social context is changed.

Men measuring themselves against other men becomes a visible theme as Kerim sets off from his anonymous Anatolian village and enters Istanbul. This is a search for wealth and power, as well as for recognition. Hence, we follow Kerim's confidence-building pursuits. This main storyline of the novel opens up an opportunity to discuss masculine identity production: Kerim's trip introduces the reader to questions about political and gender identity, and also social and organizational relationships between the sexes. When the setting changes from a provincial town to Istanbul, a whole set of values changes overnight. Kerim feels differently in the city and recognizes his position as a second-class citizen who is looked down upon.

To dramatize the urban-rural schism, Çokum utilizes the urbanized relatives of Kerim in the house where he takes shelter. When Kerim's Aunt Hatice intimidates him about his clothes and belongings, the feeling of unfamiliarity mixes with fear and shame.⁷⁹ Mistreatment and oppression from a dominant culture, Suzanne Lipsky notes, lead to feelings of self-doubt and disrespect for oneself.⁸⁰ Much of the social commentary of the narration derives from Kerim's such feelings; the traumatic encounter of non-hegemonic rural masculinities with the city becomes a painful process of masculine identity formation.

79 Çokum, *Zor*, 20.

80 Suzanne Lipsky, *Internalized Racism* (Seattle: Rational Island, 1987).

Ernst Bloch conceptualized the meeting of different temporal elements in the countryside during modernization as “non-synchronisms,” which offered fascism the ground.⁸¹ Çokum shows the intersection of different temporalities as she portrays the city in decay and violence, and in a complete contrast to the peaceful village life. Besides material hardships and explosiveness of political polarization that invades the streets, the depiction of city life introduces questions about the effects of the loss of tradition and the loosening of community ties. These serve as the pillars of the novel’s anticommunism theme. In their rural oasis, Kerim’s family is the epitome of the happy family. Other families that Kerim encounters in the city are overwhelmingly problematic; they are either loveless or broken apart. Lynne Segal, in her provocative piece, “Smash the Family,” treats the attacks of the 1960s on family as attacks on authority, and tells that the existence of a happy family is a powerful promotion of the ideology of consensus.⁸² Çokum’s happy family is a consensus both as a social unit and also with the society’s traditional confines: Çokum treats unmarried couples, single mothers, and the like as social deviants.

Aunt Hatice’s family exhibits a comfortable working-class existence. There is no explicit discrimination of Kerim, but still, airs of superiority linger. Aunt Hatice suspects that her residing in her son’s house may be a problem; the son suspects that accepting Kerim into the household may introduce new troubles. A weakening of social institutions and a loss of belief in solidarity echoes in these suspicions. With the ambivalence of city people in showing hospitality, Çokum portrays what she considers as the profound change in Turkish society of the 1970s. Zühre nine, the paternal grandmother of Kerim, is a happy resident and a respected member of the family in her son’s house in the village, a luxury that Aunt Hatice lacks in the city. Different dynamics of the city alert the reader about other possible shortcomings of urban life styles. The problem of the loosening of family ties is further complicated with new forms of attachment that come with modern life. In the city, Kerim encounters a

81 Ernst Bloch, “Non-Synchronism and the Obligation to Its Dialectics,” *New German Critique* 11 (1977): 22–38.

82 Lynne Segal, “Smash the Family,” in *What Is to Be Done About the Family?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), 29.

lifestyle that is utterly foreign to him, and this new lifestyle eventually becomes a test that measures his skills and capacity as a man.

Masculinity is a burden as well as an asset. The iron atelier to where he is sent presents a new center of value and an alternate form of community that requires commitment by Kerim. The first lesson for Kerim is that hard work is a crucial component of masculinity. The atelier symbolizes an abrupt break with adolescence, since having a job is what principally makes Kerim leave his “boyhood” behind. This rite of passage is underlined by means of a hard task given to Kerim on his first day at work: strenuous physical labor. He fails and finds himself filled with shame: “he pulled down [the lever] lowering his body. His power did not suffice. His eyes slid on to the faces of other children. They were laughing” (Asıldı, gücü yetmedi. Bakışları çocukların yüzüne kaydı. Gülüyorlar).⁸³ The intimidating performance of masculinity in front of an impudent audience teaches Kerim that a male has to suffer various kinds of pains in order to gain the status of a “man.” It is also a reminder for Kerim that his image as a man depends on the opinions and reactions of others. As Mike Donaldson states, the workplace is a place where masculine work and bravado are subordinated by the persistent authority of the superiors and the bosses.⁸⁴ The “machismo” of the workplace indicates that the atelier stands for skills that are culturally considered as male prerogatives. Finally having accomplished the task, at the expense of some pain in his hands, Kerim passes the first test necessary for becoming a part of the working-class masculine world.

While working-class values are praised in the rural settings, in the city they become threatening. Kerim befriends Kazım, a young worker in the atelier, whose knowledge about football, clubs, cinemas, and popular songs of the day introduces him to a new world, in which he measures his “masculinization” and also “urbanization.”⁸⁵ This friendship opens the gate to the urban culture for Kerim, who is still innocent of the dangers of modern lifestyles. Kazım emerges as a controversial role model for Kerim because of his rebellious manners. The two become good friends until Kazım shares with Kerim his secret

83 Çokum, *Zor*, 30.

84 Mike Donaldson, *Time of Our Lives: Labour and Love in the Working Class* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991), 11–13.

85 Çokum, *Zor*, 38.

plan to rob his rich uncle. Kazım believes that workers are exploited and he argues, rather prematurely, that their boss militates against their having their portion of the wealth. He complains about the toiling working-class lifestyle and argues that they should not be confined to such dehumanizing conditions. Kazım speaks out for the struggles of the working-class people, but throughout the narration he stays a stranger to the readers. When he emerges with his fraudulent plan, he turns into a villain without much narrative effort. His hunger for money conveys the idea of a world in which everything can be seen in terms of an obscene struggle for profit.

Filling the canvas of Kerim's growth from rural boyhood to urban manhood, the narrator makes references to the vast extremes of political upheavals that terrorize the city. In a visit to Aunt Hatice's brother-in-law, İsmail Ağa, Kerim is told about the current unrest in the city. This visit shifts the focus of the narration to İzzet bey, İsmail Ağa's boss, whose reminiscences of his childhood in Istanbul mixes with a debate with Hakan, a mysterious guest in his villa. İzzet Bey talks about his unsuccessful marriage, his mother's interferences in his life, and his brother Cevdet's marriage to Nesrin, a woman of lower class. They have a son, Ertuğrul, who is a dilettante crusader in search of revolutionary prospects by the time the period of martial law arrives in 1970.

Ertuğrul is a symbolic threat to the bourgeois family: his unemployment, nomadism, and confirmed bachelorhood mark him as a threat to "the system."⁸⁶ Ertuğrul resides in Devrim hanım's apartment, which is a meeting place for the revolutionaries. Çokum describes him, and revolutionaries in general, as misfits, who take their radicalism from a counterculture that speaks of freedom but limits itself only to unrestricted sexual relations. The narrator insists that these youngsters are bohemian children of rich families, idle and irresponsible characters who experienced a relatively safe starting point in life.

Hakan, a friend of Ertuğrul who participates in mass demonstrations and boycotts that paralyze the universities, becomes a target to an authoritative speech about Lenin, Mao, and their hidden ambitions in an angry tone by İzzet, pushing Kerim, who happens to hear this

86 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Harmondsworth: Penguin: 1977), 291.

in the next room, to ask questions.⁸⁷ Left-bashing continues with other family members. The blatant attack to the bourgeois-turned revolutionaries, which indicates that they already have much less to gain and much more to lose from the social equality of classes, sets the moral tone for the novel. The focus shifts from one character to another, and to several other individuals, all of whom have their own biases, and attempts to challenge the grand narrative of “class struggles” with personal interventions.

As Kerim moves to Nigar’s house, his mother’s sister-in-law, the setting changes to another neighborhood in Istanbul, with similar stories of the urban poor. Nigar’s daughter, Enise, is caught by her teacher at school looking with admiration at the photograph of a handsome revolutionary student leader. Her son, Nadir, is a brawling type, who emerges as an alternative image of masculinity for Kerim. Kerim sees him hiding a gun in his closet and associates Nadir with rural images of “real men” with guns.⁸⁸ There is a fight going on in the streets, Nadir says, which is free from politics, yet still fueled with violence. By suggesting a link between a mafioso hand-to-hand combat of uneducated men and the political street-fight of university students, *Zor* seems to argue for a violence inherent to masculinity, instead of a violence inherent to some particular ideology. However, the narrator makes the distinction between “violence as terror” and “violence as defense” in such a way that the story legitimizes a specific set of masculinities, while criticizing some others.

The narrator treats Kerim with sympathy and gives voice to his search in the avenues of manhood. This search repeatedly challenges an essential notion of masculinity by drawing attention to Kerim’s naiveté, to “the feminine” inside him. Surrounded by different figures of masculinity, as well as different types of political engagement, Kerim tries to form a meaningful sum for himself. The narrator sheds light on Kerim’s experiences in adult movie theaters and his discovering himself as a man: “He is not used to salacious movies. An irritation occurred, for some reason. He cannot put them out of his mind. Every now and then, the woman he saw in that last movie comes to his mind. In his spare time, or when he goes to the toilet in the atelier, he keeps fantasizing about a naked shoulder seen through

87 Çokum, *Zor*, 46.

88 Ibid., 102.

improperly drawn curtains.”⁸⁹ Instead of creating celibate characters that sacrifice themselves for national causes and praising their blood sacrifices, like Emine Işınsu does in *Sanclı*, Çokum speaks of fantasies waiting to be fulfilled and acknowledges a sexual hunger that must be “inhibited.” It is as if sex was worthy of respect only when men are properly bound in bonds of marriage. As his desperate need for privacy makes having a place of his own an important goal for Kerim, we watch him engage, more closely, in a search for money.

Setting up his own household stands for another masculine task that Kerim encounters in Istanbul. As Kerim falls short of money to build an autonomous life, Kazım’s secret plan and political engagements haunt his vision. A more sophisticated explanation of work and capital comes from Bekir, another worker, who widens the discussion of revolution to matters related to God and religion. Bekir advises Kerim to give up being a theist and expecting the good from the heavens.⁹⁰ Wealth, he argues, should be obtained by force, if necessary. His fierce opinions about God and money position the workers’ revolution as an attack aimed at destroying religion, confiscating private property, and creating a world where the working class would govern. Although they seem to ask for a fair economic balance, Kazım and Bekir’s display of frustration gets coded as a rage against the rich, instead of a general account of inequalities. The narrator neither criticizes nor applauds the frustration and will to act, but makes it clear that to steal from the rich is not a chilling response to social injustice at all.

This maneuver makes the major scare tactic of the novel visible: even if they start with good intentions for justice, the narrator implies, people can undergo a change of heart and become violent thieves. What paves such a path is the lack of trust in God’s justice. Against “atheist communism,” Çokum mobilizes folk Islam and uses Kerim to speak her mind. Kerim tries to challenge Bekir’s atheism with his grandmother’s advice of hard work and her motto of deserving

89 “Açık saçık filmler tuhafına gidiyor. Bir huzursuzluk nedense. Aklından çıkaramıyor bir türlü. Son gördüğü filmdeki kadın, zamanlı zamansız takılıyor aklına. Boş kaldığı zaman, ya da atölyenin hasasına girdiğinde açık bir perdeden görünen çıplak bir omuz hayal edip duruyor.” Çokum, *Zor*, 153.

90 Ibid., 158.

money, but he recognizes that his words are taken as the naive beliefs of a child by the grown-up men around him, who aim to bring social justice by force. It frustrates Kerim that Bekir and Kazım consider him less manly, and that his trust in the justice of God seems infantile to them. Therefore, when Bekir and Kazım plan to go out for a drink, heightening the difference between the boy and real men, Kerim hastily decides to join, to become part of the adult male spirit and prove himself worthy of respect.

Hard drinking appears as another test that forces Kerim to prove his manhood. The narrator underlines the forces of conformity and underlines Kerim's attempts to imitate Bekir and Kazım. To prove his manhood, Kerim spends the night drinking. The meeting, however, turns into an emasculating drama in the end, instead of making a man out of him. Later that night, back at the apartment, Nadir harasses Kerim for coming home drunk, and he does not let him in.⁹¹ Nadir reminds Kerim that parental authority should be respected even if this means that dependence and, therefore, boyhood could last forever. Submitting to Nadir's authority, Kerim accepts to be "a boy" despite all his efforts to become "a man." His troubles communicate how boys struggle hard with demands imposed upon them as sons, and how they are made obliged to select from a range of masculine roles, making them both breadwinning men and submissive boys at the same time.

Nadir does not let Kerim in the house and leaves him in the garden out of control and in tears. In the morning, when he rushes to work, Kerim has a fight with Kazım in the iron atelier, and as their boss questions him, he exposes Kazım's plans about his rich uncle. His boss makes Kerim understand that a lie animates Kazım's vision: he explains to him that he is not wealthy at all and has no plan whatsoever to rob him of his material wealth. Meanwhile, İzzet bey meets Ertuğrul in Devrim hanım's flat and tries to convince him to go back to his parents' house. He supports Ertuğrul in his desire for autonomy, but reminds him of traditions and of the importance on love for the family. When she learns from İzzet bey that her son finally accepted his to talk to her, Nesrin makes her way to Ertuğrul, but a car hits her and drives away after the accident.

91 Çokum, *Zor*, 161–62.

When Kerim exposes Kazım's plans to his boss the next morning in the atelier, he also insists that he wants to return to his village. The idea to leave the city and go back connotes a lost war. It means that Kerim gives up his dreams of upward mobility and decides to follow his father as a farmer. His boss however, reacts to Kazım's traitorous plans understandingly. He says he became a boss with hard work and suffered much in the meantime, suggesting that everybody who tries and works hard can make an adequate living. Making the boss part of the huge economic injustice but only in the role of a victim, this explanation serves as a reaction to the class hatred-based politics symbolized in Kazım's plans. Kerim's dialogue with the boss ends in ambivalence, leaving us in the dark whether he is fired or not, but at the end of the novel we see him returning to the atelier instead of going back to his village.⁹² He moves back in with his aunt and later, with his sister Sırma, they find a place to live on their own.

Zor ends as Kerim puts himself back on the track that will help him avoid the danger of being leavened with communist ideas. Recognizing his misdeeds, he accepts his limited lot in life and goes back to the atelier. The story closes with Kerim's sister Sırma trying to figure out how to make a home out of their recently acquired shack and dreaming of greater things to come. The end of the novel acknowledges that his striving to rise above the margins of poverty is only truly acceptable when he pays respect to his boss and keeps up the hard work.

Zor's exploration of revolutionary realms reveals stories of men who challenge the belief of hard work and respecting the morals of society. Their challenge also highlights the novel's anxious focus on issues such as family and the limits of individuality. The novel abounds with insights concerning the nature of changing household roles, as well as the possible consequences of remedies to unite individuals in the happy home. The anti-authoritarian movement of the late 1960s, which made young people in Turkey begin to reject traditional patriarchal family values and duties, appears in the novel as a concomitant danger posed to family life. In *Zor's* conservative cant, it becomes a manner of corrupting young and innocent minds, and destroying society. Çokum tries to construct a concept of revolution in crisis for seeing family as a self-restrained and oppressive institution,

92 Çokum, *Zor*, 172.

and rejecting family togetherness in the name of freedom. On the one hand, the narration shows that family is indeed a repressive institution. But on the other hand, it tries to redefine domestic alliances as a source of companionship and emotional solidarity.

In *Zor*, family functions as a powerful organizing figure, which resolves the contradictions of the social forces. The well-being of the family is taken as a critical element of the well-being of the society. This assumed relationship draws heavily on the tacit logic of traditionalism, which rises on the belief that moral values gets passed on to younger generations by traditions learned and practiced in familial relationships. Looking at the period from such a perspective, *Zor* positions the political unrest of March 12 as a result of family degeneration. The drama of the overall story contains several tricky relationships within unhappy families, between sisters and brothers, and between parents and children. Despite cursory moments of warmth, it is more the moments of struggle within the families which make the individual stories propagate. *Zor* switches among different first-person voices of opposing political positions. The narrative technique of the quilt-like story suggests a lack of cohesion, which, in the end, is left as an unresolved question.

The agents of revolutionism in the novel are principally defined by an abundant material wealth. While Kerim has to travel to cities unfamiliar to him to find a proper job and work in dangerous conditions to make a living, the revolutionaries Hakan, Ertuğrul, and the others, spend their time in boycotts and live on their rich families' resources. Since work is represented as the key dimension of Kerim's masculine identity, the revolutionaries settle in a cluster of subordinate masculinity. Although they present themselves as the sufferers of the current political conditions, it is argued that they actually benefit from the student upheavals. The narrator reproaches the rebels for their failure to act upon a consistent political agenda. What these young people do, the narrator argues, is to gather in obscure places, memorize certain ideological premises, parrot them, and engage in a web of deceit to prove themselves marginal, considering the moral codes of the society. They have an exhaustive party-line rhetoric, which they actually do not understand. They seem to deny the duty of the individual to serve society, but do not see an inconsistency in their slavish engagement to an ideology that likewise requires certain duties, which, by means of the references to the anar-

chy in the city, are shown to be consisting of unconscionable bombings and shootings.

The totalitarian nature of the revolutionary group makes the leftist obsession with freedom problematic. The stories of the revolutionaries are dominated by discourses that allude at a spiritual poverty gained at the cost of the so-called freedom search. It is vehemently expressed that identity manipulation characterizes the lives of revolutionaries: Hakan recalls Tamer's saying "Your God is Mao. You will always remember that!" (Senin Allah'ın Mao'dur. Bunu unutmayacaksn!), illustrating how far this manipulation goes.⁹³ Devrim hanım invalidates grieving for the dead comrades saying "of course some people among us will die" (elbette ölenlerimiz olacak), as if the principal premise of becoming a good revolutionary was to be stripped of any emotions.⁹⁴ Working-class revolutionaries, on the other hand, like Bekir and Kazım, have more realistic problems. They negotiate to work hard but earn less, when compared to their boss. Still, they are considered victims to the ceaseless flow of identity manipulations of demanding ideologies. Their complaints of class differences and the exploitation of lower classes are easily transformed into a pernicious greed for money in the course of the narration, when Kazım emerges with the idea to steal money from his rich uncle by brute force. This act transforms the working-class masculinities to men seeking to advance their narrow self-interests.

Kerim is an epitome of rural-based masculinities. Bourgeois-turned-leftist revolutionary masculinities embody a new tradition, which is at odds with the aspects of lower classes, and appear as an antithesis to Kerim. Kerim and Ertuğrul's stories coincide in a search for an affirmation of individual agency. Both have a yearning desire to have a separate house, and rule their own lives. This search inextricably mixes with a search for masculine affirmation. In contrast to Kerim, Ertuğrul's struggles are principally intellectual: he is somehow a part of the revolutionary movement, but he hesitates to dedicate himself to it and rather prefers to live in a void directed by his pleasures. Kerim's story claims the virile attributes for working men. To work means to have dignity, to be capable, and responsible. This vision pushes Ertuğrul, who is confined to his Aunt Devrim's apartment, the

⁹³ Çokum, *Zor*, 47.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 107.

household space where men do not entirely belong, to the peripheries of masculinity.

Ertuğrul's life connotes a change in discourses of gender relations, but this change also contributes to the assumed loss of masculinity. Although he establishes an ambivalent authority over women in the domestic sphere, Ertuğrul is actually a lay-about, who does not accept the burden of any responsibility for the household. By positioning Ertuğrul in the feminine witnessing position without any genuine agency and will to act, *Zor* validates the argument that the qualities associated with manliness belong both to the domestic sphere of family life and the outdoor spheres of public life. Refusing marriage as the proper domain for sex, Ertuğrul escapes his possible responsibilities as a husband. Living on his family's resources, he also ignores the masculine responsibility of having a job and assuming agency in public life.

The fear of dissolution of traditional family values is expressed most vehemently by means of the sexual freedom attributed to the revolutionary leftists. Çokum shows sexual freedom as the key to and criterion of all other freedoms in the revolutionary vision. Ertuğrul forms a kind of commune in Devrim Hanım's apartment and requests the guests who please him most to stay. Ertuğrul becomes "the revenge" Devrim was longing for her entire life: she sees taking Ertuğrul away from his family as a victory against those who left her loveless and helpless. Ertuğrul's search for autonomy, his rebellious and disagreeable manners show that the form and function of the family is in transformation. The family itself is no more than a set of personal relations among people related to each other, as if accidentally. Ertuğrul has a different set of values, beliefs, and engagements than his mother and his father. He reacts to his parents' expectations of him to comply with the traditions. With a disdainful tone, the narrator points out the shortcomings in Ertuğrul's perception of his parents as outmoded people. He looks at his family members almost as items of consumption, and the fact that he lives on their resources also attracts criticism.

The most striking episode, which communicates Ertuğrul's alienation from his family, comes at the end. When their maid phones Devrim's apartment in order to inform Ertuğrul about the accident that caused the death of his mother, he shows no sign of grief on the phone but just asks if she has already died:

“I am Pakize,” the woman said. [...]

“You mother had an accident my boy!” Hanged down beneath the blanket, Nazan’s first toe is moving. She is in the flabbiness of just having had sex.

“Is she dead?”

“Yes... My dear lady Nesrin passed away.” Nazan stood up. Her face turned pale.⁹⁵

The scene attempts to tie the radical individualism of Ertuğrul, and his lack of human sensibilities to the so-called sexual revolution embedded in the leftist revolutionary vision, which caused young people to lose track of love and respect. This is not a sexual freedom that cherishes and respects the body and the soul, *Zor* argues, but one that abuses them.

Çokum is critical of the “abusive freedom” in the revolutionary movement. In contrast to the institution of marriage, which has the capacity to build respectable forms of manliness and womanliness, the liberal partnerships among the revolutionaries build some decadent forms of masculinity and femininity. With a dramatic juxtaposition of female figures, the narrator of *Zor* argues that appropriating revolutionary ideals does not challenge women’s oppression at all. The revolution as such has no intention to liberate women from their designated roles as housewife and mother. On the contrary, it keeps women in the service of men. The proof comes with the submissive manners of Ertuğrul’s partner Nazan. The revolutionary-leftist actress Nazan washes the filthy underwear of Ertuğrul and obeys his orders. The submissive image of Nazan constitutes a stark contrast with the warrior image of Sırma, the unhappily-wed sister of Kerim, who abandons her husband and claws her way out of the village all by herself. The uneducated village girl makes her “revolution” and becomes a maid to Devrim in the city. Although Çokum does not

95 “Ben Pakize,” diyordu kadın. [...]

“Annene araba çarptı oğlanım!” Nazan’ın battaniyeden sarkmış ayağının başparmağı oynayıp duruyor. Az önceki birleşmenin gevşekliği içinde.

“Öldü mü?”

“He ya... Getti benim Nesrin hanımım.” Nazan doğruldu. Yüzü solgunlaştı. Ibid., 215–16.

allow us to witness this big transformation in a detailed manner, we are invited to appreciate it as readers.

Sırma's coming to the city and becoming a housemaid to Devrim is both a story of success and also of hypocrisy, because it presents Devrim's appropriation of cheap female labor in her house, which contrasts her enthusiastic attachment to working-class discourses. Devrim orders Sırma around in the house and then watches her tired body and dull skin with pity:

Seated on a couch, Devrim was filing her nails.

"Did you finish the carpets, dear? Shall you wipe them once? Wipe them, will you? Add some vinegar to the water, to make them shine." [...] She looks so old. A face that has not met any softening or moisturizing lotions. Her skin is crusted. It suddenly becomes red. She can be fifty, or twenty-five...

"How old are you?"

Sırma replies without stopping, and raising her head.

"I am around twenty-four."⁹⁶

Devrim's figure inspires the question if it is acceptable for a supporter of worker's rights to be a "bossy" appropriator of female labor. *Zor* brings to light the problematic position of Devrim and the resulting conflicts for those caught in the middle, between bourgeois lifestyles and working-class ideals.

Another important conflict is represented with the terror of Makbule, the teacher, who finds her students circulating the photograph of a revolutionary-leftist student leader. This mysterious student leader is probably Deniz Gezmiş, who not only became a controversial hero, but also a style icon in the 1970s. This episode probes into the youngsters' continued infatuation with iconic figures. In Makbule's terror, the narration depicts the struggle to absorb new

96 "Bir koltuğa oturmuş tırnaklarını törpülüyor Devrim hanım.

—Halılar bitti mi anam? Silsen mi bi kere? Siliver hadi? Son suyuna sirke kat, parlasın. [...] Nasıl da yaşlı görünüyor. Yumuşatıcı, nemlendirici kremler görmemiş bir yüz. Kabalaşmış derisi. Bir çabuk kızarıyor. Yaşı elli de olabilir, yirmi beş de...

—Kaç yaşındasın sen? Hiç durmadan, başını kaldırmadan cevaplıyor Sırma.

—Yirmi dört varımdır." Çokum, *Zor*, 119–20.

definitions of freedom. What terrifies her is not that the political clashes of the times produced the popular images, but that to be a leftist revolutionary causing anarchy has become hip. Girls' looking at the photograph of a man admiringly is threatening not only because it suggests erotic identification with "the beast," but also because it implies a threatening development of scopic pleasure in girls. The shock value of girls' fascination with the image of some revolutionary-leftist student leader is that a single photo turns young female subjects, who are assumed to be sexually passive, into intently gazing onlookers. Çokum treats this change as a threatening evolvment of a radically different culture. She interprets pleasure-seeking girls as women in men's clothing, which is not acceptable.

The major thrust of *Zor* is Kerim's coming to Istanbul, his ambivalences concerning the morally and physically healthy influences of rural living, and the temptations of the city, which attempt to lure individuals away from familial pursuits. The unsettling feeling of displacement symbolized in Kerim's trip to the city is a common emotional state for the modern subject. The novel portrays the urban youth culture that emerges from oppositional political movements as an assault to the established notions of femininity and masculinity. *Zor* accounts in some detail how the political fighting has exhausted people and made them bitter, but what it tries to describe is the disintegration of the family as a social formation. It suggests that class discourses corrupt people and create beasts with a tendency to rob and kill. In the way the revolutionary characters are presented in the story, *Zor* has a strong resemblance to Emine İşinsu's *Sanclı*. It dresses the revolutionaries with negative characteristics and bemoans the death of greywolves. By means of İzzet bey, the narration gives certain credence to the search for autonomy and voices a need for the transformation of authoritarian relationships to relationships of mutual respect between generations. However, Kerim and Ertuğrul's respective searches for individuality receive criticism by the narrator when the two young men go beyond the limits and avoid their responsibilities to their families.

With such a background, the narrator enthusiastically supports the idea that it is impossible for the leftists to understand the struggles of lay people. Revolution is a game for them. Similar to Kazım,

the worker-turned-thief, Devrim's guests cannot escape being one-dimensional in the novel. The narrator reads their minds and quotes their words, but hardly informs the reader about their pasts or lets them speak about themselves in a detailed manner. Their denial of values carried by older generations is the only common characteristic attributed to these people, and the narrator imposes the idea that this denial is not an attempt to find a unique new voice, but a tactic for the misfits to make themselves recognized.

Revolution, in *Zor*, is a romantic predilection of upper-class intellectuals and youngsters who desperately attempt to borrow some attention by their reactionary attitudes to the old concepts of family, religion, sex, and society. Domineering male characters such as Tamer, and the gender hierarchy that keeps women in low positions communicate the authoritarianism of the left. The service Ertuğrul enjoys in Devrim's apartment by female comrades is presented as a symbolic portrait of how genders meet in the revolutionary leftist agenda. Even in this supposedly liberated community there is still a gender hierarchy, which puts women in the service of men, but women cannot complain because of the strict rules. After all, the narrator suggests, these women are not wise enough to question their lifestyle. As the narration progresses, the traitor profile of the revolutionaries is enhanced. Adultery also becomes part of the story, and it underlines the lack of proper morals in revolutionary lives: Ertuğrul finds out that a friend of his, Birgül, has been involved in an affair with his father, and we also discover that Devrim hanım's beloved Ömer is also a married man.

The enemy to which Çöküm opposes is a caricature of the revolutionary left, which does not see sexual freedom as tied to revolutionary outcomes but sees revolution as tied to a sexual revolution. *Zor* attacks atheism and sexual liberation using scare tactics, and recalls the deeply rooted values of Turkish society, which are argued to be hospitality, respect for the elderly, family, and God. A fear of radical social changes influences the narration, which mobilizes a retrogressive ideal and pushes family relations and traditions to the fore as crucial sites of cultural collectivity. The confidence of people in their fellow man takes on a threatening meaning in the context of the civil-war conditions of Istanbul. *Zor*'s insistent punctuation of the ills of class discourse seeks to pit the people against each

other by proclaiming that the enemy of the nation in the upheavals of March 12 is not external but internal. Anybody who struggles to accept his share of life and tends to rebel and revolutionize is a potential criminal and a traitor. Even a moderate questioning of poor conditions is treated as an act with a hidden agenda to make communism palatable to adolescents and young adults. The rehabilitation offered is to trust God and wait for the good. *Zor* invalidates human choice and nullifies the possibility of changing history through conscious effort.

CHAPTER 3
*Masculinity and Modernization:
Does Love Emasculate?*

In *The Intimate Enemy*, Ashis Nandy rejects “the model of gullible, hopeless victim of colonialism caught in the hinges of history,” and discusses how victims make their own choices, whether consciously or by default, while victors in such a system may also appear to be “camouflaged victims.”¹ The colonial pattern, which is based on the forced learning of certain norms and categories via punishment and reward by the powerful, is present in March 12 novels in the form of *endocolonialism*, the colonization of internal territory (i.e., big cities), where rules and limits set by the military state create a culture of oppression and alienation. The military state treated its citizens like children who needed to civilize themselves into a culture of authority with masculine prerogatives. *Bir Düğün Gecesi* (A Wedding Night) by Adalet Ağaoğlu and *Gençliğim Eyvah* (Alas! My Youth) by Tarık Buğra offer an epilogue to the March 12 novels, both by virtue of their date of publication (1979), and also due to their making the military coup part of a bigger historical frame. *Endocolonialism* is treated as a product of Turkey’s modernization through cultural colonialization. These novels merit further attention because they discuss the paradoxical identification of the victims with the aggressor, and the hypermasculine figures of power as part of the question of modernization. Nandy introduces hypermasculinity to the context of British–Indian colonial conflict and discusses androgyny and the Gandhian praxis of non-violence. Borrowing the term hypermasculine in colonial contexts from him, I seek to analyze how non-violent activism is treated in the context of March 12, along the history of Turkey’s modernization.

Instead of an isolated event in Turkish history, both Ağaoğlu and Buğra evaluate the military coup as a result of continuing reflexes in Turkish modernization. Military-civil dichotomy is no longer pertinent as a theme in these novels, since both of them illustrate a cli-

1 Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: The Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 15–16.

mate in which people are already socialized into a culture of militarization. *Bir Düşün Gecesi* and *Gençliğim Eyvah* conjure up the still-fresh memories of the period and occupy themselves with the new forms of anxiety coalesced around the state of being alternative, different, and engaged in political action for changing the world. The politics surrounding the characters is complex and vividly illustrated. Both novels tackle the political questions in a direct manner; they suggest that politics is not something people experience next to their personal affairs, but is rather a web of experiences that make them construct and realize their inner selves. Men are stuck between potency and impotence, and beset by questions about their masculine agency. Both novels illustrate the complex and often contradictory ways men engage with their masculinity, and discuss the need for power as inherent to human beings regardless of their gender, social class, or political engagements. Individuals try to empower themselves in the face of the escalating revenge between political rivals and the claustrophobic atmosphere in the novels of March 12.

Bir Düşün Gecesi depicts a wedding party, which serves as a symbol for a union of the military with the bourgeoisie. The novel propagates the inner struggles of the guests at the party, questioning their personal and political commitments. Ağaoğlu discusses how militarization shaped the post-coup society. Ağaoğlu's panoramic look at the period via the consciousnesses of various characters provides conflicting points of view on the period, and this polyphony makes the novel a successful artistic and critical epilogue to the March 12 experience. Ağaoğlu is also unique because of her critical approach to the masterminds of the intervention. Before Ağaoğlu, the writers dwelled on masculinities exploring the destructiveness of police agents, interrogators with official sanction, stiff bureaucrats, and so on in the settings of March 12, but Ağaoğlu raised the question to more powerful figures—the generals—for the first time.

The problem of making commitments and resorting to violence is further developed in *Gençliğim Eyvah*, which focuses on a clandestine anarchist group. Buğra employs the popular scare tactics of the right-wing novelists of March 12, and blames the revolutionaries for the chaos of that period. He deals with the demonic leader of a clandestine movement, who attracts young students and uses them to achieve his political aims. In *Gençliğim Eyvah*, March 12 is considered a violent masquerade of masculinity in which young men risk

their lives to prove themselves worthy of attention. Buğra does not praise blood sacrifice like Emine İşinsu; rather, he constructs a story of search around a young man's vulnerable working-class existence, who is brainwashed by the leader of the clandestine group. Torn between his love and responsibilities, the young man reflects with anxiety on what makes him submissive to the woman he loves as well as to his leader who sees him as his heir. In its exploration of young people finding allure in paramilitary groups, Buğra convincingly asks on what basis a masculine heroic status will be won.

INSTITUTIONALIZED MASCULINITIES:
MILITARY AND MARRIAGE IN ADALET AĞAOĞLU'S
Bir Düğün Gecesi

In Judith Butler's theory, gendered performance is implicitly treated as a product of modernity together with "subjectivity," also an achievement of modernity. Ağaoğlu's *Bir Düğün Gecesi* (A Wedding Night) focuses on contrasting gendered subjectivities and discusses the upheavals of the March 12 period in the panoramic atmosphere of a wedding party, intentionally in an ironic way, leading a discussion of different versions of facts instead of just facts.² Ağaoğlu attempts to engage the decadence of the post-dictatorial period in a series of interlocking stories. She makes the readers think of the failures of Kemalism, leftist revolutionism, anarchism, and feminism in the overall frame of the March 12 experience, with a sense of clarity and reappraisal.³ Although this appraisal is accompanied by a detached irony and a bitter disillusion from time to time, its main object is to understand the psychological traces of the historical moment around the coup. The past and present are interlaced in the narration instead of a strict linear narrative, and there is a compound narrative eye, which allows us to see through several perspectives at the same time.⁴

Moving away from the broad realist form developed by the major-

2 Adalet Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düğün Gecesi* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003).

3 *Bir Düğün Gecesi* is the second book of Adalet Ağaoğlu's famous trilogy "Dar Zamanlar" (Narrow Times).

4 *Bir Düğün Gecesi* received positive criticisms and won the Sedat Simavi Prize, the Orhan Kemal Novel Award, and the 1980 Madaralı Award.

ity of the writers of March 12, who turned their eyewitness accounts into literary texts, Ağaoğlu engages with the memories of the period in a postmodernist style. *Bir Düşün Gecesi* is a skillful combination of political concerns with aesthetic experimentation. The novel compiles the stories of men and women with reflections into the consciousness of the characters. “Stream of consciousness” is the leading technique in the novel; however, despite the continuity suggested by the term “stream,” *Bir Düşün Gecesi* succeeds in portraying the discontinuous nature of thought. A more fractured discourse appears in the narration toward the end of the party, when the influence of alcohol starts to be felt, and the impaired mental skills make it harder to think. Ağaoğlu’s characters recreate their pasts and critically examine themselves in some silent testimonials. In between these silent testimonials, there is also a questioning of the constructed nature of experience and memory. The importance of *Bir Düşün Gecesi* for this study is its broad and moving portrayal of the new realities of post-coup Turkey.

In *Bir Düşün Gecesi*, Ağaoğlu portrays time as a set of episodes: the novel’s intricate structure weaves the observations of a group of people who differ in their ways of life, political engagements, and beliefs. With a laconic style, Ağaoğlu lets her characters speak directly to the readers. Putting their accounts side by side and shifting the focus of the narration from the vision of one character to another, *Bir Düşün Gecesi* compiles a set of fragmented memories and contrasting accounts into a convoluted whole. The characters are unable to know the intensity of their transition and the impact of this transition on the people they love. With contrasting accounts of the people who have been witnessing the same events, a cross-examination becomes possible, which brings to light the full dimensions of their experiences. Ömer is a witness to Tezel’s struggles, and Tezel is a witness to Ömer’s anxieties. Both are witnesses to Ayşen’s oscillation between militant political action and a safe life. By the same token, guests at the dinner party observe and explore the lives of one another. This produces different versions of facts, which contradict each other. Ağaoğlu uses these contradictions as a productive realm to understand the legacy of the March 12 intervention.

The wedding party is a microcosm of the Turkish middle- and upper-middle-class society in 1973. It illustrates a new vision where money has become an end in itself, and moneymaking has become

invested with value, no matter how unlawfully it is achieved. The wedding symbolizes the union of the money-hungry bourgeoisie with the blood-thirsty military: cutthroat capitalist İlhan's daughter Ayşen, who in the past was a leftist revolutionary activist, marries the son of a renowned general, Ercan. One of İlhan's sisters, Tezel, is present at the wedding, but the other sister, Aysel, is absent.⁵ Aysel's husband, Ömer, an Oxford professor of economics, who after the coup was fired from his job and was detained for weeks during the martial law period also watches the crowd: high-ranking generals, well-known businessmen, friends and relatives of the couple form the happy audience. They seem secure and isolated from the uncanny atmosphere created by the intervention of the armed forces. The party is characterized by diversity, differing ideologies, political engagements and classes, which have already made members of the same family opponents of each other. Aysel's absence at the wedding is explained by her strained relationship with her brother İlhan, who made a fortune in the shadows of powerful military figures and then turned his back on his sisters, blaming them for their attachment to the revolutionary left.

R. W. Connell states, "masculinity and femininity are inherently relational concepts, which have meaning in relation to each other, as a social demarcation and a cultural opposition. This holds regardless of the changing content of the demarcation in different societies and periods of history."⁶ To make visible this social demarcation and the polarized male/female binary, Ağaoğlu places a male (Ömer) and a female intellectual (Tezel) with similar histories at the vantage point of her narration. Ömer's thoughts occasionally mix with Tezel's words. The two turn themselves into silent observers of the wedding party, and their mental escapades provide a panoramic view of the party, as well as some detailed information on the personal histories of the guests. What brings Tezel and Ömer together, besides this witnessing

5 Aysel is the protagonist of this trilogy's first novel *Ölmeye Yatmak* (Lying down to die). She is an academician and a sociologist who has an affair with one of her students, Engin, and who struggles with the idea of suicide after she finds herself helpless and alienated from the people in her life. Her affair forms one of the main narrative threads in *Bir Düğün Gecesi*, which continues to explore Aysel's alienation.

6 R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 44.

position, are the problems they experienced in the past due to the orthodox leftist revolutionism of this young generation. Their reflections not only convey some of the guest's ups and downs, but also illuminate their ambivalent position toward the revolutionary movement and the struggles of leftist intellectuals.

The novel opens with Tezel's words "Let's drink unless we commit suicide" (*intihar etmeyeceksek içelim bari*), and the readers are introduced to the major male character, Ömer, by means of his exploration of her symptoms of alcoholism. Tezel's struggle with alcohol and nihilistic attitudes form an integral part of her story and symbolically represent the defeat of the revolutionary left. In her image, the social chaos of politically tired Turkey appears as an individual condition, a state of psychological anxiety, and a lack of meaning.

From the corner of the room where he took refuge with Tezel, Ömer watches the bourgeois audience of men and women trying to prove themselves rich and important in exaggerated costumes. In hushed voices, the two criticize the party. The partygoers embrace their values of privilege and tradition the of luxury. Ömer's inner voice is heard over the delicate clinking of glasses of wine and whiskey, while his mind follows up with thoughts and memories, which serve to unlock the secrets of the wedding party guests. Ömer's inspections are interrupted by his thoughts of his prolonged marriage to Aysel, his fascination with the young bride Ayşen's earlier attraction to him, and his seeing Tuncer, a former revolutionary student leader, who used to lead the boycott of lectures at the university where Ömer was a professor. Ömer learns that Tuncer is now a Ph.D. student in Lausanne, as the son-in-law of a recognized businessman. Seeing Tuncer causes Ömer to return to the past and ruminate on the transformation of his revolutionary friends and students.

In tandem with the episodic recollections of Ömer and Tezel, internal frictions and rivalries of the greater family are revealed via minor characters such as Gönül, the wife of the groom's uncle, and İnci, a friend of Tezel's. İlhan, his mother Fitnat, Ömer's former student Tuncer, and Ercan's mother, Nuriye, also contribute with their accounts. İlhan thinks back on Ayşen's militant past and tries to convince himself that he is saving his daughter's life by forcing her into marriage with the son of a prestigious general. Fitnat recalls İlhan and Aysel's political fights with sorrow and tries to understand the animosity of her children toward each other. Ömer's student, Tuncer,

anxiously wonders what his former professor may be thinking about his marriage to Yıldız and his fleeing to Lausanne. Tuncer's recollections of his militant years introduce Ali Usta, a working-class character, who also appears in the first novel of Ağaoğlu's trilogy, *Ölmeye Yatmak*. Ali Usta looks after two of his nephews, Ahmet and Murat. He sends Ahmet to the police academy hoping he will receive a proper education, but the boy graduates as a violent and aggressive police officer. Nuriye, mother of the groom, tries to calculate the possible consequences of Hakan's interference at the wedding party, casting her mind back to the fight between her sons, Hakan and Ercan.

The bride, Ayşen, also questions her ideals, past actions, and political motives, elucidating her dislike of her parents' passionless marriage, her father's hunger for money, and her mother's extravagant lifestyle. Ayşen's revolutionary past includes setting fire to the car of an American bureaucrat, which places her in police custody.⁷ Her parents consider this a disgrace to the family name. Ercan's father, Colonel Hayrettin, contacts the local officials and has them release Ayşen, upon which she starts seeing Ercan, her long-time admirer, as her only supporter, and finally accepts Ercan's marriage proposal. Tezel also looks back upon her marriages. She first gets married to Mehmet, a fellow student at the academy and then to Oktay, the son of a wealthy family, who lives off his father's resources. She gives birth to her son, Kerem. Tezel recollects Oktay's ambivalent engagement with the revolutionary movement and how deeply he was connected to his bourgeois lifestyle. She remembers how being in custody and getting persecuted by the military government became political markers among her friends.

The extravagant wedding party, first and foremost, speaks directly of the status of men: the fathers of the wedding couple. The quality of the party is an indicator of the status and masculine prestige of the fathers as breadwinners. The head of the household's display

7 This is a reference to a real event. On 6 January 1969, students of Middle East Technical University headed by Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, Sinan Cemgil and Taylan Özgür set the car of Robert Komer, US Ambassador to Turkey, on fire during his visit to the campus. Komer was in South Vietnam in 1968 before being appointed ambassador to Turkey, and was therefore a disdained figure.

of wealth emerges as an indicator of the family's power. Erhan's father, Hayrettin Özkan, who is a general, is only mentioned in the novel by his name and profession. But this little bit of information automatically situates him as an epitome of power in the atmosphere of the wedding party because of the still-fresh memories of the harsh military intervention. Ayşen's father, İlhan Dereli, does not speak to the reader directly either, except in a short chapter where the writer lets us follow his thoughts about the wedding. Mostly, we learn about İlhan through the reflections of Tezel, Ömer, and his daughter Ayşen. *Bir Düğün Gecesi* mocks the wedding as a metaphor for the cooperation of the bourgeoisie with the armed forces in overthrowing the government. The bourgeoisie (İlhan and Müjgan) leaves its "capital" (their daughter Ayşen) to the secure keeping of the armed forces (Erhan, the son of the General Hayrettin Özkan). This cooperation is intended to put an end to ideological militancy (Ayşen's militant leftism) and normalize the political atmosphere (normalize Ayşen by means of the institution of marriage).

The wedding party is a vivid portrait of men's "trafficking in women."⁸ Ağaoğlu depicts it as the building block of the belatedly capitalist Turkish society. The bride's father, İlhan, is a satirical personification of capitalism. He thinks that he has successfully fulfilled his paternal responsibility by giving a luxurious wedding for his only daughter. His paternal status is an important pillar of the story, as İlhan is the only male and the oldest child of the family, who became the heir after his father's death and assumed an authoritarian role toward his sisters. İlhan becomes an oppressive and bossy father figure, a role which he enjoys because of the power assigned to it. İlhan's patriarchal will to own and govern meets his hunger for money and an ideological tendency toward being a greedy capital owner, making things even worse for the other members of the household.

Hypercash brings hypermasculinity and İlhan does not hesitate to take political advantage of the opportunities that his wealth generates. He befriends notable bureaucrats and makes substantial economic gains using their connections. His mother, Fitnat hanım, praises his hard work, dedication, and obstinacy for trying to improve the

8 Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 157.

living standards of the family, being thankful for the protection offered by İlhan's power and wealth in the absence of her husband. But the girls oppose to the ways they are being treated, feeling that İlhan lacks a balanced combination of masculinity and maturity, and experiencing the unpleasant consequences of this lack. İlhan's excessive masculine patronage distances his sisters, Aysel and Tezel from him, and their ideological clash gradually turns their relationship into a tense connection beset by a deep-rooted conflict.

The major tension in the wedding party grows out of this familial friction. Forced to choose between their family and revolutionary leftist political beliefs, both Aysel and Tezel experience hard times. The party gives a searing account of the family's struggle to fight disintegration, showing brothers and sisters alienated from each other, yet missing the old days when they were close, and looking for reconnection. Aysel's absence from the party heats up the story of the prolonged tension in her relationship with her brother. Although İlhan is the very model of a money-hungry bourgeois and the angry patriarch, he is at the same time a man aware of his deeds. He recognizes that his daughter Ayşen has hardly smiled since her wedding started. He also sees how his wife, Müjgan, accustomed to their high-class life, eventually turns into a greedy woman, who calculates the party's potential capacity to establish new business connections for her husband. Ağaoğlu shows how İlhan finds himself under stress as the breadwinner son/husband. She does not mock the stress a man feels to support his family and build prestige, but rather implies that relentless hunger for more money and power can mistakenly seem as normal breadwinner stress because of men's traditional roles of being the main wage earners.

Ömer's reminiscences complete the portrait of İlhan, the ultimate power holder and distinguished ruler, who knows what is best for whom, and who chauvinistically advocates for his truths, rejecting any other alternatives. The family's strong dependence on İlhan's wealth pushes Tezel and Aysel to a secondary position. Ömer reminds Aysel why his brother İlhan is the sweetheart:

See, your mom is more proud of İlhan than she is proud of you.
As if it were you who took to guarantee her elderly days. As if
it were you who moved her from that stove-heated house. As

if it were you who bought her a TV to keep her occupied during the nights while she is on her own.⁹

İlhan's mother, Fitnat, praises the prestige that comes with his wealth. She is the most ardent supporter of İlhan. Her thoughts reflect how some women accept/encourage hypermasculinity in men and how, as agents of the masculinization, they contribute to the subsequent mythologization of them. Accounts of Fitnat not only reflect the deep motherly love felt for a firstborn child, but also intricately show how in Turkish culture sons are seen as substitute husbands, making them privileged over their sisters.

As Fitnat hanım recalls İlhan and Aysel's greatest fight, it becomes clear that much of İlhan's anger is caused by his inability to govern Aysel's thoughts and police her actions. This despotic patriarchal role links İlhan to military figures of the novel, who engage themselves with a masquerade of power and agency in the wedding party. Following Fitnat hanım's thoughts, we learn that her responsible breadwinner son sees the military figures of March 12 as the men who shouldered the burden of putting the country back on its tranquil track. Although she is painfully aware that guns are not problem-solvers, Fitnat hanım, too, sides with her son in applauding the armed forces as the rescuers of the country: "My son is right, if they were not here for us, our lovely country would now be in ruins (onlar başımızda olmasalar, oğlum haklı, canım memleket mahvolup gitmişti)."¹⁰ By placing individuals harassed by the military rule next to others who, despite being witnesses to harassment of their family, evaluate the military's powerful presence in the country as a favorable solution to political deadlocks, Ağaoğlu critically shows that family as a social institution has lost its primacy in the atmosphere of terror.

In this new world, what matters most is money and the power it brings. Aysel's burst of anger at her brother İlhan during a family dinner, which later turns into an unpleasant fight, speaks loudly of the covetous and grasping character of capitalism:

9 "Annen senden çok oğluyla övünüyor işte. Sanki sen mi güvence altına aldın kadının yaşlılık günlerini. Sanki sen mi kaldırıp taşıdın onu o sobalı evden? Sanki sen mi televizyon alıverdın ona, geceler boyunca canı sıkılmasın diye, yapayalnız?" Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düğün Gecesi*, 92–93.

10 Ibid., 141.

Do I have to see your greedy face just because we have the same mother? You are such an opportunist! [...] You know one thing: to tyrannize people, even the ones closest to you. When they do not obey you, you lose your control. [...] We should approve everything you do, to make you feel better, shouldn't we? I do not approve, and you know that. Tomorrow, if you feel like it, I know that you won't hesitate to buy the guns of the soldiers. Once one gets used to buying, then the whole country seems to him as a bunch of land with no record and no owner. Once you get used to confiscating, you buy the military as well, and point their barrels to your blood brothers and sisters!¹¹

Aysel's thoughts reflect the crucial preoccupation of the novel, which is to illuminate the relationship between the military and money-loving bourgeoisie. Her protest, however, does not turn into a flag waved every now and then in the narration. Except for her husband, Ömer, and sister, Tezel, who silently approve her reaction, the members of her family discredit Aysel as a dissenting voice.

The novel presents a mocking picture of military figures, each intoxicated with his own importance and ready to fight "for the well-being of people," a pretext that conceals their personal gains because of their acts. Ağaoğlu shows that combat and military life represent the most traditional masculine domains by presenting the wedding party audience in great respect to these figures. Mixed with fear, people try to honor and comfort the only anti-victims of the military intervention. The relationship between the civil individuals and the military figures during the wedding party allegorizes the submissive political atmosphere that people were forced into during the events of March 12. Ömer observes the moment when Erhan's best man, General Rıfat Paşa, enters Club Anatolia:

11 "Aynı karından çıktık diye senin çıkarıcı suratını görmek zorunda mıyım? Fırsatçı sen de! [...] Bir bunu öğrenmişsin. En yakınlarına bile boyun eğdirmeyi. Eğmediler mi edepsizleşiyorsun. [...] Yaptıklarını üstelik bir de onaylamalıyız ki için rahat olsun değil mi? Onaylamıyorum işte! Onaylamadığımı biliyorsun. Yarın çok sıkıştırsanız askerin silahını bile satın alırsınız siz. Her şeyi satın almaya bir kez alışıncaya, bu memleket sahipsiz, tapusuz bir toprak parçası çünkü, bir kez el koymaya başlayınca askeri de alırsınız ve namluların ucunu öz kardeşlerinize bile çevirirsiniz!" Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düşün Gecesi*, 142.

“Paşa has arrived, he has arrived.” Paşa has arrived. Someone on my right says to the other next to him, “the best man of the groom is General Rıfat Paşa.” [...] İlhan moves two steps forward, and extends his hand: “My dear Paşa...” Paşa enters the building. Following him, his wife and daughter—probably his daughter—enter. Next comes his orderly, and following him Hayrettin Özkan, İlhan, and then everybody from the groom and bride sides of the families, who have been waiting for about an hour and a half, according to the protocol, enter. [...] Inside, almost everybody who has been sitting are now standing up, almost everybody standing are holding their breaths, in their places, putting their feet together and drawing their abdomens in, trying to decide whether or not to swallow the small meatballs, sausages, and pastries in their mouths.¹²

The fear of the military turns ordinary people into submissive soldiers. In their party dresses, people hold their breaths and draw their stomachs in, as if they were privates waiting to be inspected by a high general. People submit themselves to power, whether out of fear or hopeful of gains, and invite an authoritarian rule.

As a challenge to the mighty image of the military figures, the novel explores the struggles and alienation of ordinary soldiers who fought at the fronts. Ertürk, a Korean war veteran and uncle of the groom, challenges the powerful image of the high generals.¹³ The name Ertürk is symbolic because “er” in Turkish means “private,” the

12 “‘Paşa geldi, Paşa geldi.’ Paşa gelmiş. Sağ yanımdan biri, yanındaki birine ‘damadın nikah tanığı Korgeneral Rıfat Paşa,’ diyor. [...] İlhan iki adım öne çıkmış, elini ileriye doğru uzatıyor: ‘Paşam...’ Paşa giriyor. Ardından karısı, kızı—herhalde kızı—giriyorlar. Ardından emir subayı, ardından Hayrettin Özkan, İlhan, onların ardından da protokol sırasında dakikalardır, belki bir buçuk saate yakın bir süre bu anı bekleyen bütün oğlan ve kız yanı giriyor [...] İçerde herkes, oturmakta olan hemen herkes ayağa kalkmış, ayakta duran hemen herkes de soluğunu tutarak, oldukları yerde, ayaklarını birbirlerine birleştirmiş, karınlarını içeri çekmiş, avutlarındaki küçük köfteleri, sosisleri, börekleri yutmakla yutmamak arasında kalakalıyor.” Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düşün Gecesi*, 186–87.

13 Ibid., 238. It is another ironic coincidence that the head of the September 12 junta that assumed power a year after the publication of this novel, General Kenan Evren, is also a Korean war veteran.

lowest rank of soldier.¹⁴ The “private-Türk” Ertürk is an important figure because he brings the possibility of understanding the role of men in uniform as victims. *Bir Düğün Gecesi* gives voice to Ertürk via the notes in his diary. This section features the revelation of a young man’s painful days in a foreign land, fighting for victory over the big powers. Ağaoğlu addresses anxieties concerning the hegemonic language of manliness that set the climate of war, and elaborates on the polarity of Turkish and U.S. masculinities.

During his stint at the front, Ertürk observes his subaltern position as a soldier from a poor country that allows its children to be used as pawns. He gets wounded and befriends Tommy, an American, in the hospital ward, who dislikes the food served there. Ertürk records in his diary his response to Tommy’s diet in detail:

I loved and respected my American war-mates, from the private to the soldier of the highest rank. Jealousy never passed through my mind while they were eating chocolates, delicious cold meat, pies, and desserts, and drinking lots of beer. They deserve it. As children of a rich country who extended their helpful hands to poor countries like us and mobilized means to protect us from our enemies, the communists, these people have the right to do whatever they like and they deserve everything they eat. [...] We finally found a good formula. We combine the eatable parts of the food served to us for Tommy to eat, and we combine the rest for me to eat. This way Tommy started to gain his strength back, which makes me happy.¹⁵

14 “Er” means both “man” and “private” in Turkish. This word is the simplest explanation of the association of masculinity with the militaristic ethos in the Turkish culture. Every man is, by definition, a private.

15 “Ben Amerikalı savaş arkadaşlarımı, erinden en yüksek rütbeli subayına kadar her zaman çok sevmiş ve saymışımdır. Onlar çukulatalar, enfes soğuk etler, çörekler, tatlılar yerlerken, bol bol biralar içerlerken kendilerini kıskanmak aklımdan köşesinden geçmemiştir. Çünkü bunları yemek onların hakkıdır. Zengin bir memleketin çocukları oldukları halde bizim gibi fakir memleketlere yardım elini uzatmış, düşmanlarımız komünistlere karşı bizleri korumak için her şeylerini seferber etmiş bu insanlar ne yapsalar layık, ne yeseler haktır. [...] Şimdi aramızda iyi bir formül bulduk maamafih. Bize verilen yiyeceklerin en yenilebilir gibi olanlarını birleştiriyoruz, bunları Tommy yiyor. Kalanlarını da birleştiriyoruz, ben yiyorum. Böylelikle Tommy de biraz kuvvet kazanmaya başladı, bundan ötürü seviniyorum.” Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düğün Gecesi*, 214.

Ertürk experiences the horrors of war and returns home embittered. The Korean war episode serves to illuminate the big picture about the way the military works, and it also marks a biting criticism of the Turkish military role in the global monopoly for power, by means of Ertürk's naive patriotism.

Ertürk's helplessness in Korea is a striking contrast to the generals' show-off behavior at the wedding party. *Bir Düğün Gecesi* uses these contrasting images to relativize the ultimate power attributed to the military and show how naive patriotism becomes a curtain before the eyes of a man dedicated to performing his duty for his country. Ertürk recognizes that he is not a subject but an object in some war, but he fails to accept this. A seductive tale of "serving the nation for a higher cause" constructs him as a hero, while in fact his role is that of an ordinary man in pain, within the more complex realm of international relations. The pressure Ertürk feels to distance himself from pain, shame, and vulnerability introduces us to what Kaja Silverman calls the "dominant fiction" in male subjectivity, constructed upon men's cultural identification with the role of possessing "the phallus."¹⁶ The theme of "inability to accept weakness" is elaborated with the accounts of Ömer, who negotiates his role as an idealist professor, a leftist intellectual, and a faithful husband.

Ömer relates his personal story of March 12 to his witnessed accounts of the damage done to his colleagues, friends, and students. In this painful rethinking of the past, he also criticizes himself; he negotiates his reactions to the trauma of others. He considers how people exacerbate each other's faults when they are unable to compensate for their comrades' failings during the mayhem. With his accounts, the discussion on weakness and anxiety gets separated from the military sphere and moves into a broader territory of masculinity. Ömer's reminiscences about his years at the university, his being taken under arrest, and falling in love with Ayşen show how "strength" is seen as the major criterion of sexual difference, not only in physical but also in moral and emotional terms. Ömer's reflections make the quintessence of masculinity a major problem.

Ömer's negotiation of the disruption of traditional gendered expectations, "gender vertigo" in R. Connell's words, causes the story

16 Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 15.

to move further along into the anxieties of masculinity.¹⁷ “Gender” in the revolutionary movement appears as an important question. While a myriad of doubts and uncertainties of her past and present assail her, Tezel asks herself: “How did we end up like this? They say we are weak. Of course we are weak! What else should we be? Torturers?” (Nasıl böyle olduk? Zayıfmışız. Zayıfız elbet! Ne olacaktık ya? İşkenceci mi?).¹⁸ She thinks that leftist intellectuals turned anger into grief rather than protest, as they were unable to answer oppression by adopting similar tyranny. Ömer accepts failure as well, but he does not seem very enthusiastic to investigate the reasons for it: “I do not want to start all over again. Regret should not be allowed at all. It should not be asked where we went wrong” (Benim yeniden başlamaya niyetim yok. Pişmanlıklara ise hiç izin verilmemeli. Nerde yanlış yapıldığının sorusu hiç sorulmamalı).¹⁹

The contrast between Tezel’s relatively easy acceptance of defeat and “weakness,” and Ömer’s obstinate attempts to turn a blind eye to the past and the defects of the revolutionary movement, serve as a springing point for *Bir Düğün Gecesi* to comment on the embodied norms of masculinity. The contradiction between Tezel and Ömer’s responses to “being defeated” by superior powers opens up a moment for reflection on hegemonic masculinity. Tezel’s discourse on weakness and strength offers a glimpse at the revolutionary families, where men were emasculated and women were choosing masculine roles out of necessity. Although she accepts the defeat of the leftist revolutionary movement on the grounds of “a weakness,” Tezel’s accounts on the defeat relativizes the “femininity” attached to this weakness and submission to the more powerful.

There is as a certain amount of masculinity tolerated in Tezel, who stands for an epitome of power all by herself, as a twice-divorced single woman who makes a living on her own and drinks to excess. She is a manly woman, not domestic at all, but not masculine. Tezel’s attitudes toward her ex-husbands and her son indicate that she is a woman who not only challenges the state of being “a wife,” but also struggles with the definitions prescribed to being “a mother.” Her unconventional femininity, backed up by her sister Aysel’s earlier

17 Robert Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 137.

18 Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düğün Gecesi*, 73.

19 Ibid., 97.

attacks at their brother's patriarchal mastership, introduces into the narration a new dimension of gender discussions, for it makes one think that "masculinity" does not exclusively belong to men. It is not the exclusive range of experience of male bodies, but can be "performed" by women as well. The performance of masculinity by female characters is common in March 12 literature, and *Bir Düşün Gecesi* shows that masculine performance becomes part of the agenda of women, for survival in a male world.

Tezel's "masculinity" is connected to her courage. This is underscored during an episode of remembrances, which takes Tezel back to her aggressive reaction to a couple that criticized her paintings for not being revolutionary enough. In her tense encounter with them in the art gallery, Tezel first draws a tolerant image. She makes no objections to their initial reference to her painting as quasi "working-class." However, when challenged by the revolutionary youngsters by a more severe verbal attack, she asks indignantly if they perhaps recognize the shades of the struggles of the working-class explicitly in the pieces she has painted. She expects them to appreciate her work and to recognize her status as a revolutionary painter. When this mention gets assailed with insults, she turns herself into an arrogant defender: "I stretched and I contracted. Just like a loving mother, a brave soldier, I stretched my arms in front of my paintings. 'Fuck off, you two!' I was not used to using such biting swear words until then." (Gerildim, kasıldım. İyi bir ana, yiğit bir asker gibi gerdim kollarımı tablolarımın önüne. 'Siktirolun be!' O zamana dek böyle keskin küfürler edemezdim).²⁰

By equating a loving mother to a brave soldier on the grounds of their courageous guardianship role, Ağaoğlu underlines the common human emotion to protect your loved ones and indicates that men do not have a monopoly on such a role. She also notes that "masculinity" disguised by the act of swearing is likewise uncertain. Toward the end of the novel, when alcohol takes over on a more predominant role, we find Ömer hopelessly trying to find a swear word, a verbal formula to exert his masculinity. The alcohol unlocks Ömer's fear of facing his fragility. The son of a diplomat and an Oxford graduate, Ömer questions norms of masculinity in the mostly traditional Turkish society. There is a strong emphasis on the impor-

20 Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düşün Gecesi*, 47.

tance of civilized behavior and emphatic thinking in Ömer's self-reflections. He appreciates the joy he has found in the love of the young Ayşen, but he fails to express his feelings to her. Trying to build a courageous man of agency in himself, he recalls his wife Aysel's testimony to him about her affair with Engin, a former student. He, however, cannot conceal that he became annoyed and angry when Aysel told him about her affair. Well aware that his reaction will be a measurement of his "masculinity," Ömer plays the "understanding" husband.

Ömer admits that his kindhearted reaction to Aysel's confession was a performance in itself, which is later invalidated by his jealous and intolerant acts. He remembers how bitterly he reacted to Aysel's happiness when she received a letter from Engin, from prison:

I am Westernized, that's it. So much Westernized that I try to hide Ayşen's interest in me, from myself. So much Westernized that when Aysel said this evening that there was a letter from Engin, I replied "what a joy" in an ill-temper... That means there was rage hiding deep inside me for a long time. That high spiritedness was a performance, an abstractness or an act of pride.²¹

As he acknowledges his wife's affair with a younger man, Ömer becomes aware of his age. The idea of being westernized, however, shows the contrast of being a man of age to being a man of manners. This East-West gap brings a new dimension to the question of masculinity, as men's attitudes toward women reveal a greater cultural problem.

By positioning an intellectual man's anxiety for trying to hide his despotic anger into the cultural codes of the East-West dilemma, Ağaoğlu develops a different way of looking at the events. Ağaoğlu's *Bir Düşün Gecesi* questions whether it is possible to argue for masculinity's cultural essences. Ömer's bursts of anger leave readers with

21 "Ben Batılıyım, bitti. Ayşen'in şimdi bana karşı duyduğu eğilimi kendimden bile gizlemeye yeltenecek kadar Batılı ama. Bu akşamüstü Aysel 'Engin'den mektup var' deyince 'bu ne sevinç' diye hırçınlaşabilecek kadar Batılı hem de...Kaç zamandır gizlenmiş bir öfke varmış demek ki içimde. O aşkınlık bir numaraymış, bir yapaylık, kendini beğenmişlik ya da." Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düşün Gecesi*, 102.

the difficult problem of understanding the transformation of an “Oxford graduate” to a “despotic husband.” His sense of insufficiency is even more pronounced when his reflections of Engin make him question himself and take him back to his years at the university. Ömer thinks about how he handled his students’ militancy. He remembers Tuncer, a leading figure of the student revolts, who used to terrorize his classmates and force them to boycott the lectures. Their unexpected meeting at the party deepens Ömer’s thoughts as Tuncer and his wife, Yıldız, transform the party into a self-induced encounter with political correctness for Ömer.

Ömer learns that Tuncer married Yıldız, the daughter of a rich businessman and member of the parliament, and that he is now a Ph.D. student in Lausanne. Tuncer’s anxious attempts to explain his marriage and his escape from Turkey, and his trying to find excuses for his giving up the militancy he once adopted, makes Ömer angry:

He wouldn’t need to feel sorry. He wouldn’t feel the urge to make this explanation “Yıldız and I, we loved each other very much...We are still in love.” He used to think that love shadows revolutionism. He erased this, and found Yıldız beneath. What if he erases Yıldız as well...? But it is not an easy thing to do. One may find something he would never think of beneath the thing he erases. Life is like that...You never know...²²

Tuncer’s embracing of the capitalist ethic of liberal individualism brings to the forefront the Gordian knot of the narration: the difficult choice between personal gain and collective benefits. Ömer painfully recognizes that people are no longer interested in the collective good. He witnesses, in Tuncer, the libertarian credo of self-interest, which pushes him into a deep depression.

In Ömer’s reflections, both Aysel’s affair and Tuncer’s conversion become major rites of passage. Ömer finds himself a cuckold in his

22 “Şimdi de hiç ezilip büzülmeyebilirdi. Bana şu açıklamayı yapma gereğini duymayabilirdi ‘Yıldız’la çok sevdik birbirimizi... Çok da seviyoruz hocam...’ Aşkın devrimciliğe gölge düşüreceğini sanırdı. Bunu kazıdı altından Yıldız çıktı. Onu da kazısa... Ama bunu yapmak kolay değil. Kazınan şeyin altından belki de aklının ucundan bile geçirmediğini sandığı bir şey çıkar. İnsan hali... Hiç belli olmaz ki.” Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düğün Gecesi*, 149–50.

personal life and by extension, a cuckold in his political attachments. His subordinated masculinity acts as a “convex mirror” for the hegemonic masculinity of İlhan and other figures of power.²³ Ömer compares and contrasts himself to his wife, Aysel, who betrayed him but immediately confessed her affair. He finds himself weak for having feelings for Ayşen, and even weaker for not being able to talk about them with his wife. He considers his propensity for violence after discovering his wife’s sexual infidelity but tells himself that he is too well educated to commit a low-class murder.²⁴ Thinking back on the tightly woven masculine honor system, Ömer doubts if emotions are, in fact, the creations of cultural systems. He sees that he can belong to neither the proletariat nor the bourgeoisie: he feels disturbed by the extravagance and low cultural profile of the money-hungry bourgeoisie but cannot position himself either in the orthodoxy of the proletariat.

As Ömer comes to see himself as a waif, he loses control of his thoughts. He recalls the painful memories of his release from prison and Aysel’s skeptical remarks about his quick release from custody:

“They say that those who took Ayşen out of trouble helped Ömer too...” [...] What kind of face was that? Ostensibly, she trusts her husband. She trusts him completely. Supposedly without reservations. How so? [...] So utterly that she could ask “Why did they release you? How come this quick?” “They say fungal infection is epidemic inside...” I kiss her. Hug her, laughing. She ran to the bathroom and soaped her mouth and face. She soaped herself so much that even I doubted that I am healthy.²⁵

23 George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 6.

24 Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düşün Gecesi*, 101.

25 “‘Ayşen’i kurtaranlar Ömer’i de kurtarmışlardır, deniyormuş...” [...] Nasıl bir yüzdü o? Sözde kocasına güveniyor. Bu güven sonsuz. Sözde sonsuz. Ne kadar sonsuz? [...] ‘Neden salıverdiler seni? Nasıl böyle çabuk?’ diye sorabilecek kerte sonsuz. ‘İçerde mantar hastalığı yaygın diyorlar...’ Öpüyorum onu, ona sarılıyorum. Daha çok da, gülüyorum. Koşarak banyoya kaçtı. Ağzını yüzünü iyice sabunladı. Beni bile sapasağlam olduğumdan kuşkuya düşürecek kerte çok sabunladı ağzını, her yanını.” Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düşün Gecesi*, 291.

Plagued by the suspicion that Ömer informed the authorities with names of other revolutionaries and was therefore released immediately, Aysel treats her husband like a villain. Thrilled by her treatment, Ömer finds himself swearing at his wife for the first time in his life, and becomes a man suited better to the conventions of masculinity by virtue of this act.

Ömer's recollections give a new twist to the novel as we approach the end. When he is interrupted by Tezel and asked what he has been thinking about, Ömer tells her that he is writing a novel in his head. A chapter consisting of excerpts from the diary of the groom's Korean war veteran uncle, Ertürk, follows this episode. Ertürk notes in his diary his proud service in Korea, alongside American soldiers, who consider him a second-class man. He recalls getting wounded and receiving treatment in a camp and trying hard to get used to the low-quality food that was served. A trip to Tokyo after this medical treatment is mentioned, along with an encounter with a charming lady called Sumida. Later, Ömer recalls his trip to Tokyo to participate in an international conference and mentions a river named Sumida, confessing that his mind played a game and chose the name of the river as Ertürk's Japanese sweetheart. This meta-fictional twist not only changes Ömer's position from one of the ordinary observers of the wedding party to the writer of the novel about this wedding party, but also brings with itself questions about the way memory works. Ömer's confession that his mind plays tricks on him problematizes the entire body of recollections he made. It becomes hard to assign a truth-value to his conscious observations. More importantly, the idea of memory as a natural collection of trustworthy evidence gets challenged.

After this meta-fictional twist, Ömer gets drunk and loses control of his behavior. He intends to phone Aysel to confess that he has feelings for the young bride, Ayşen. He transforms himself into a rage-driven cuckold and decides to come out of the closet. Ağaoğlu eloquently shows that this is a matter of "masculinity," because Ömer repeats to himself that he wants to see Aysel, for a brief moment, "utterly weak" (iyice zayıf).²⁶ Ömer evaluates the physical distance between his wife and him as a failure of his masculinity and tries to

26 Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düğün Gecesi*, 293.

compensate this remoteness with young Ayşen's emotional attraction to him. Half-drunk, he makes Aysel cry on the phone and takes this as a victory of his masculinity. The party continues as İlhan finds Ömer in a remote corner and takes him back to the cocktail lounge. Aloof from the public sphere, he parses the vibrant scene before him: people are singing the Officer March and dancing samba. Tezel laughs hysterically and murmurs to herself, "my dear country, my dear country! You are capable of what deeds!" (Ey güzel Türkiye! Ey güzel Türkiye! Sen nelere kadirsin!).²⁷

A man of age beset by feelings of inferiority, and with no status in society or respect, Ömer becomes paralyzed when he returns to the lounge. He sees Hayrettin Özkan, the groom's father, "roaring" to his wife and her sister, when asked if he has heard from his younger son, Hakan, and whether he will be coming to the party.²⁸ At the core of male peer pressure, he imitates the general's masculinity:

"Why did the Paşa get angry at my son, is there something wrong?" The answer comes from Tezel: "The orchestra does not play the march well enough mom!" [...] Then her motherly cries: "It would be better if Aysel too had been here... If only she had come... We would be all together on this happy day of ours." I am an Ömer sitting for a quarter of time next to a general. I am an Ömer influenced by the Paşa. I roar as well: "Enough of this Aysel nonsense, please!" After that, a quick shot of dry rakı.²⁹

The spectacle of bad manners, accompanied by alcohol, is a spectacle of masculinity for Ömer. Borrowing the authoritarianism of the general, Ömer tries to alleviate his wounded masculinity's loss of

27 Ibid., 305.

28 Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düşün Gecesi*, 306.

29 "Paşa niye öfkelenmiş oğlum, bir şey mi var?" Yanıtı Tezel'den: 'Orkestra marşı yeterince canlı çalmıyor da anne!' [...] Ardından bu kez de onun annelik inildemeleri: 'Aysel de oluverseydi... Ne olur sanki geliverseydi... Şöyle güzel bir günümüzde, hep birlikte.' Ne de olsa bir çeyrek saattir bir Paşa'nın yanında oturmaktayım. O Paşa'dan çok etkilenmiş bir Ömer'im. Kükrüyorum: 'Bırakın artık şu Aysel lafını, çok rica ederim!' Ardından hızla büyük bir yudum susuz rakı." Ağaoğlu, *Bir Düşün Gecesi*, 306–307.

power. His hysterical imitation of the General is a witty representation of how gender roles are artificially determined by exterior pressures.

In an alcoholic haze, Ömer's memories of his arrest mix with his observations at the lounge. He finds himself trying to wash a filthy toilet, with a guard watching and threatening Ömer with making him lick the floor. All of a sudden, the military's corruption of power marks a chilling scene that jolts the reader out of the lively atmosphere of the wedding party. With this flashback, which links the authoritarian general to torturers victimizing people, *Bir Dügün Gecesi* reminds us that in memories lie moral obligations that are difficult to ignore. To remember is necessary in order to keep alive the memory of crimes committed, and it is equally important that people should be awakened from the illusions of power. The allusive reference to the dark atmosphere of March 12 resurfaces the blistering polemic about the military's role in the country, which forms one of the major problems that lie in the foundations of the novel.

The crowd, unaware of the struggles of Ömer and Tezel, continue enjoying their luxurious dinner, the high-class music performed by celebrity singers, and the joys of dancing. Businessmen make their dirty agreements, bureaucrats calculate their shares, and the crowd proudly embraces them as the epitome of success. Shortly before the end of the wedding party, Tezel receives a call from Aysel, who informs her sister that she is being taken into custody by some policemen that intruded into the house. In coded phrases, Aysel tells Tezel to warn Ömer that he should not make his way back home unless he wants to get caught by the policemen waiting for him in the neighborhood. The novel ends as Ömer and Tezel leave Club Anatolia and wander into the dark streets of Ankara. A gunshot echoes in the silence of the night, and they hear people running for help. They finally decide to take a taxi to Tezel's house. By ending the novel in this way, closure gets avoided, and it is hinted that the days that follow will continue in a similar atmosphere.

Bir Dügün Gecesi shows how March 12's maelstrom shattered families and destroyed lives, tortured ordinary people, and forced young people to betray each other. It is evident that the collapse of the leftist revolutionary movement gave Ağaoğlu a painful stimulus to create the drama, but there are some other factors at work as well. Her diaries, *Damla Damla Günler* (Days Drop by Drop) indicate

that a similar sister-brother political friction was present in Ağaoğlu's personal life.³⁰ In the context of the novel, Aysel emerges as an identifiable amalgam of a fictional social scientist and Ağaoğlu herself, while Aysel's sister Tezel is another amalgam that borrows from Ağaoğlu's younger brother Güner Sümer, and Aysel's brother İlhan borrows from Ağaoğlu's elder brother Ayhan Sümer. Hence, *Bir Düğün Gecesi* is a novel with autobiographical overtones, but Ağaoğlu inscribes these autobiographical overtones into the novel by means of references to contemporary life in Turkey.

In her diary, Adalet Ağaoğlu expresses her discontent for literary critic Fethi Naci's overlooking that *Bir Düğün Gecesi*'s major criticism is of masculinity. She argues that Naci postpones dealing with "the wedding party's masculine side, the accounts on the general status, the armed forces, the Korean affair, the military education, and so on" in his criticism of *Bir Düğün Gecesi*, and she explains this retreat with a kind of established auto-censorship.³¹ In the wedding party, there are men reduced to weak and vulnerable individuals, men who possess a destructive financial and political power, and women trying to fit themselves into masculine roles in order not to be crushed. The association of the wedding party with the alliance of the military and bourgeoisie reveals the frailty and diminished power of the intelligentsia in the specific settings of March 12. Ağaoğlu relates this diminished power as a diminished masculinity.

Bir Düğün Gecesi deals with the military as a problem of masculinity and patriarchy. The will to dominate and govern is discussed in the novel from different perspectives, and the satiric dialogues between Tezel and Ömer reveal the Janus-faced behavior of the people surrounding them. Ağaoğlu invalidates Tezel and Ömer's greater claim to "the truth" for being leftist intellectual victims of the military intervention. Tezer's alcoholism and Ömer's deepening obsessions with his agency and masculinity shed light on the damage done,

30 Adalet Ağaoğlu, *Damla Damla Günler* (İstanbul: İş Bankası Yayınları, 2007).

31 "Hele Fethi Naci'nin belki de çok haklı biçimde *Bir Düğün Gecesi*'nin eleştirisinde düğünün erkek yani, orgenerallik, askerlik, Korelik, harbiyelik bahsine hiç el sürmemesine devamlı 'roman bunlardan ibaret değil kalanına sonra değineceğim' diyerek hiç değinememesine ne diyeceğim? Kendini de beni de korumuş bulunan çok deneyimden geçmiş otosansürüne teşekkürden başka." Ağaoğlu, *Damla Damla Günler*, 593.

but Ağaoğlu does not let her characters claim an ascetic victimization. She materializes a bitter criticism: Ömer's increasing futile attempts to overpower Aysel reveal an imitation of the aggressive power of the military, which tries to prove by brutality its paramount control and power. In this sense, Ağaoğlu suggests that even the victims of the military seem to depend on them as a role model, to construct an invulnerable self-image and claim agency. This is a direct and sound criticism to the male-stream Turkish left, and it encourages the reader to look beyond the given portrait and to imagine the mistakes of the revolutionary movement in Turkey. The fixation upon the patriarchal dynamics by means of Ömer's struggling masculinity and İlhan's aggressive breadwinner status diverts attention from the greater oppression inflicted upon the society by the military forces, but in the end, all form a cumulative trauma afflicting the country, the culture, and the people by strict definitions of masculinity, oppressive patriarchal rules, a hungry-eyed capitalism, and a militaristic ethos.

URBAN GUERRILLA IN LOVE: MASCULINE AFFIRMATION
IN TARIK BUĞRA'S *GENÇLİĞİM EYVAH*

Tarık Buğra's *Gençliğim Eyvah* (Alas! My Youth) depicts the sorrowful circumstances of a young man caught up in an urban guerrilla group.³² Oedipalizing the atmosphere of March 12, Buğra focuses on the tense relationship of the young man with the mastermind of the group and explores the young man's struggle for power in this father-son relationship. The intention of Buğra is to show how good can meld into bad with ideological manipulation and create unflinching guerrilla fighters out of ordinary people. The journey of the young man toward self-discovery and his quandary between his individual desires and his duty to the society constitutes the central plot of the novel.³³ *Gençliğim Eyvah* begins with a prologue, which states that the events narrated therein were emanated from the testimonials recorded by the writer, who had interviewed the protagonist years

32 Tarık Buğra, *Gençliğim Eyvah* (Istanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2002).

33 Buğra received the Turkish National Culture Foundation Award in 1979 with this novel.

after the incidents took place. The story, then, is developed from the end. The testimonials of the protagonist, who is referred to in the novel as “*Delikanlı*” (youngster), uncover the story of a clandestine group aiming at anarchy, which was managed by a man called “*İhtiyar*” (the old man), a figure widely known as a prominent professor. *İhtiyar* is the man behind the horrors of the 1970s. He is a predatory and pitiless man who manages hundreds of agents that initiate political and ethnic uprisings.

İhtiyar’s personal history holds together some controversial moments of Turkish history, such as the collapse of the Committee of Union and Progress, the İzmir conspiracy, and the controversial 1933 university reform. A lengthy description of *İhtiyar*’s past establishes parallels to controversial events in Turkish history and indicates that *İhtiyar*’s secret clique was established long before the 1970s. The personal history of *İhtiyar* makes the national modernization of Turkey a part of the dilemma of March 12. Following this brief introduction, the narration fixes on the current setting of 1970s Istanbul, where *İhtiyar* appears as a prestigious man who manipulates the political atmosphere by publishing fierce articles in dailies, giving talks in public meetings, and delivering lectures at the university, with hundreds of devotees secretly working for him. *İhtiyar* seems, at first glance, not representative of any particular political ideology. However, in the course of the novel, *İhtiyar*’s speeches gradually assume a political character overtly critical of Marxism and revolutionary leftism. For much of the novel, the narrator shares *İhtiyar*’s political ideas and his distaste of class discourses, transcending the neutral position of an apolitical narrator.

Delikanlı, whose name is revealed in the latter parts of the novel as *Raşit*, attends a few lectures of *İhtiyar* at the university. In a set-up, one of *İhtiyar*’s girls, *Güliz*, meets *Raşit* and introduces herself as a lonely woman, who lives with her adoptive father. Meanwhile, the intellectual bond between *İhtiyar* and *Raşit* develops, and *Raşit* realizes that he enjoys the company of this senescent man. *İhtiyar*, on the other hand, gradually becomes besotted with *Raşit*. He finds himself convinced that he has finally discovered his crown prince, who is to manage his secret organization after his demise. With this challenge, *Raşit* falls into an anxious self-examination, trying to judge his masculinity and norms forced upon him, to see whether he is fit to rule or a “countertype,” someone who falls outside the boundaries of a

society's stereotype as proposed by George Mosse.³⁴ The major thrust of *Gençliğim Eyvah* is about the influences on Raşit of his homosexual bond to İhtiyar, and his anxieties of being "countertype" in his eyes.

Klaus Theweleit's work on male identity within the Freikorps likewise highlights the difference between "man" and "un-man" and the role that the "un-man" plays in the construction of masculinities.³⁵ From a man with no blemish on his political record, Raşit turns into a violent "urban guerilla" with a great anxiety of effemination. While exploring Raşit's transformation into a "warrior," Buğra comments on standards of normative masculinity, using Raşit's statements about himself and women. Raşit's anxieties and fears from femininity invite an examination along Theweleit's theory of the bifurcation of the male psyche, in which Theweleit locates "effeminacy, unhealthiness, and criminality" as features assigned by fascism to its self-induced enemies and argues that men became unstable while trying to eradicate the feminine within them.³⁶

In addition to the acute transformation of Raşit, the novel also deals with the profound change Sıdika/Güliz had undergone after she met İhtiyar. İhtiyar discovers Sıdika when she is nine years old, on the ferry that she regularly takes to beg for money from passengers. He fosters the beggar child, names her Güliz, and sends her to a private school to make her more presentable. The uncanny intimacy between İhtiyar and Güliz, the jailer and his victim, gives clues about İhtiyar's sadistic personality. İhtiyar erases the independent identity of Güliz. He orders some of his men to befriend her and some others to tease and look down upon her. He entertains the endless struggle of the girl to find her place in the world. An instrument for the play on İhtiyar's wit, Güliz turns into a woman beset by suspicions, who tries to stick to a cold rationale in order to keep her life under control.

The most remarkable characteristic shared by the İhtiyar-Güliz-Raşit trio is solitude. Episodes from İhtiyar's past reveal that he got

34 George Mosse, *Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 56.

35 Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, Volume 2. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

36 Ibid., 13.

arrested during one of his secret operations, faced the death penalty and later obtained a pardon for his crimes, following his wife's controversial sacrifices. When he learns that she saved his life by sleeping with his enemies, İhtiyar murders his then-pregnant wife, and alienates himself from his surroundings. In a similar vein, Güliz is a lonely person. Having a problematic childhood that descends from a long line of abuse and outrage, she is unable to establish tenderhearted relationships, just like İhtiyar. She sees every person as a rival for her share of the world. When she moves from the slums of Istanbul to the villa of İhtiyar, Güliz buries the memories of her alcoholic mother, but she continues her life in emotional isolation. The last member of the trio, Raşit, is the oldest son of a poor family with five children, who comes to Istanbul for his education. But he, too, does not initiate any contact with his family during the course of the events that find him a privileged member of İhtiyar's clique. With İhtiyar in the role of a father, and Raşit and Güliz as his siblings bereft of familial protection, the trio stands for a convoluted form of intimacy.

Given its polemical quality, Buğra's Oedipal discourse of connection and commitment might be read alongside a critical exploration of hegemonic masculinity. In its dystopian analysis of political commitment, love, betrayal, and hypocrisy involving two men and a woman, *Gençliğim Eyvah* touches upon a series of questions about stiff gender roles. The feminine side of man is a critical question throughout the novel in the image of Raşit, who struggles both as an activist and as a lover. The novel is critical of the turning of young people to atheist and materialist communism, and Buğra finds the masterminds behind the paramilitary activities, which created an atmosphere of chaos in the country, as the real guilty parties. The novel ensnares readers with its venomous discourses about conspiracies and the hidden agendas of those who seem to be ordinary people.

Given the impression of honesty and verisimilitude introduced by the note that opens the novel, *Gençliğim Eyvah* claims to be read as another "true story" of the March 12 experience. However, it is hard to say that the novel succeeds in catching the distinctive quality of a documentary, or even the taste of a realistic novel, because it is more like a patchwork of psychologically loaded interpretations and detailed descriptions of gestures with bursts of political debates. Although it begins as a testimonial story, *Gençliğim Eyvah* hardly

provides the subjective perspective of the protagonist Raşit. Rather, the omniscient narrator describes the events, comments on them, and gives some angry speeches about İhtiyar's thoughts. The narrator offers judgments toward İhtiyar's opinions and acts as an arbiter of morals in the political domain. When the characters relate to things that pass through İhtiyar's mind, they often confirm each other's or the narrator's thoughts.³⁷

The story in *Gençliğim Eyvah* explicitly thematizes a close male friendship, which includes an overwhelmingly paternalistic and protective attachment. İhtiyar's attachment to Raşit is a created father-son relationship. His interest in Raşit is suggestive of an aggressive father's intimate attachment to his most-favored son, a link that swings between two extremes in the eyes of Raşit: reunion and patricide. In this relationship, it is "the father" who signifies the past, and "the son" who signifies the future, as the names İhtiyar (old man) and Delikanlı (youngster) also suggest. Reunion, therefore, means a continuation of the established state of affairs and values, whereas patricide means the construction of a new world by the new generation. Within this framework, Buğra explores the frictions between two men of different generations, whose lives intersect in Istanbul in the 1970s, and discusses the concepts of community and belonging. The father and son relationship helps post the question of certain values passed on from one generation to another, as a question of stable masculinity.

The introductory chapter of the novel presents a fierce fight between İhtiyar and Delikanlı in İhtiyar's villa, in which Delikanlı teases İhtiyar by challenging his ideas and accepts a last assignment from him, the bombing of a consulate, which will end their collaboration. İhtiyar accuses Delikanlı with a false show of masculinity. He tries to convince Delikanlı that his death is not wanted, since it will not solve anything. Güliz is not present in the room, but the ways the two men relate themselves to her is made clear and expresses that she is a major figure in their lives. In Theweleit's terminology, Güliz is a "Red Woman," who threatens to weaken the male soldier.³⁸ The

37 Ali Serdar underlines the single-voiced narration of this novel as well. See Ali Serdar, "Muhafazakâr Bir Romancı Olarak Tarık Buğra'yı Okumak," *Pasaj* 3 (2006): 66.

38 Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. 2, 172–74.

fight shows İhtiyar and Delikanlı standing at opposite poles in terms of their responses to acts of political militancy and anarchist action. Delikanlı wants to separate from İhtiyar's clique; but, at the same time, he wants İhtiyar to recognize him as a "manly" man, so he accepts the dangerous last assignment.

After this context has been set, the narrator introduces İhtiyar's past crimes. İhtiyar is the only son of an Ottoman sheik, "a masculine beauty," and a living "image of wealth."³⁹ İhtiyar's being depicted as a beautiful male image is bewildering because this imagery transforms him to a potentially homoerotic symbol. The narrator describes him as a demon, "a devil, a mephisto," and uses monstrous imagery throughout the novel.⁴⁰ İhtiyar gains an extraordinary power and becomes the state within the state in the 1930s. He starts a charity foundation devoted to the "protection and development of witlessness" and engages the task of undermining the structures vital to a state: he plays with the universities, organizes assassination conspiracies for the notables, and keeps writing fierce articles in the dailies, in a period when death sentences come one after another and push the country into a dark atmosphere.⁴¹ He stays anonymous, organizes his men into an underground group, and seeks new targets to satisfy his malice. In the 1940s, we find İhtiyar as the invisible hand beneath the propaganda campaign that attempts to corrode the premature democracy in the country.⁴²

His cold rationale, brutality, and tenacity bring İhtiyar to the fore as a remorseless tyrant. His true nature becomes the subject of an extended argument, as readers are introduced to the secrets of İhtiyar's life. İhtiyar describes men working for him as "underclass" (ayaktakımı) and "erect reptiles" (dik sürüngenler).⁴³ Throughout the novel, he gives speeches that mock the zest for freedom, love for humankind, and compassion felt for the nation and fatherland. The title of the novel, *Gençliğim Eyvah* (Alas, My Youth!) resonates with the destructiveness symbolized with İhtiyar, and relays his will to destroy to a larger theme of harnessing young people's enthusiasm

39 Buğra, *Gençliğim Eyvah*, 32–34.

40 Ibid., 12.

41 Ibid., 42–50.

42 Ibid., 66.

43 Ibid., 25; 45.

for destructive purposes.⁴⁴ İhtiyar's secret clique introduces the readers to the lore of anarchism. İhtiyar talks about men's will to reproduce and to have sons to continue their legacy, and confesses that Deli kanlı's presence in his life corresponds to such a desire to exist in the future.⁴⁵ He compares his tender love for Delikanlı with the thirteenth-century Sufi mystic Rumi (Mevlana)'s love for his disciple, Şems. This is a symbolism worthy of close examination, as it suggests a convoluted intimacy. The narrator complicates the nature of their relationship by referring to İhtiyar's attachment to Delikanlı as a link with erotic overtones: "His attachment to Delikanlı was a kind of passion. In fact, that was the only soft thing in him, the only warmth" (Aşka benzerdi Delikanlı'ya karşı beslediği sevgi. Daha doğrusu, içindeki tek yumuşaklıktı, biricik ısıydı o).⁴⁶

Gender, as Eve Kosofsky Sedwick notes, is a "double continuum" between the homosocial and the homosexual.⁴⁷ This double-bind situation is central to the interpretative strategy implemented in *Gençliğim Eyvah*: Raşit's need for masculine affirmation and his search for power intersect İhtiyar's need to continue his legacy, which stands for another search for masculine affirmation. Thinking of himself as a sterile man because he has not fathered any sons, İhtiyar seeks the son that can make him feel as a real, virile, and powerful man. The father-son dyad in the novel is also a metaphor for the ambivalent relationship between intellect and brute force. The contrast between İhtiyar and Delikanlı on the use of violence sharpens the bigotry of political action all the more.

While İhtiyar tries to create a son by his own efforts, Raşit attempts to solve the mysteries of the underground group. He has his beliefs and values brought into question by İhtiyar, whose ideological tirades are often backed up by the narrator. İhtiyar describes his job to him as to "create depression and discontent and deceit, to nurture, incite, grow, produce and derive the ones that already exist or have

44 The phrase "Gençliğim Eyvah" is the tag line of the famous folk song inspired by the pains of the War of Dardanelles.

45 Buğra, *Gençliğim Eyvah*, 23–25.

46 Ibid., 30.

47 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Gosh, Boy George, You Must Be Awfully Secure in Your Masculinity!" in *Constructing Masculinity*, eds. Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis, and Simon Watson (New York: Routledge, 1995), 12–20.

a tendency to exist” (bunalımlar ve hoşnutsuzluklar ve kinler oluşturmak, olan ve olmak istidadında bulunan hoşnutsuzlukları, bunalımları, kinleri beslemek, körüklemek, azmanlaştırmak, üretmek, türetmek).⁴⁸ The narrator recounts how İhtiyar uses young people for the dirty work and saves prestigious brainwork for himself. İhtiyar both manipulates the elite politics of the parliament and the street politics of the society. He influences crowds of youngsters thronging the streets by his fierce speeches and articles.

Once a young man around them, Raşit gradually recognizes that the people he respects are in fact players directed by İhtiyar. Using people’s weaknesses, İhtiyar creates a political agenda that will outlive him, an agenda with disseminating hatred as its guiding political philosophy. Although he celebrates the wanton destruction carried out by his men, İhtiyar himself stays a political manipulator and never gets personally engaged with physical action. Raşit gradually realizes that İhtiyar’s secret clique is not an initiative of reform or revolution to ameliorate the political situation, but rather a physical organization, which actually harms people and feeds on chaos. He grasps that İhtiyar aims to destroy the infrastructures of the state and society not to build something new, but to please his urge to govern the brute destruction. This makes him recognize that he is a conduit for İhtiyar’s opinions and ideologies.

The overwhelmed Raşit decides to disobey İhtiyar’s orders in his last assignment, and he throws the bomb into İhtiyar’s favorite restaurant-club. This act stands for the reconstruction of his masculinity as much as it stands for the reformation of his damaged autonomy and agency. After this challenge to İhtiyar’s orders, the novel moves into an uncanny mode. In a moment of epiphany, Raşit realizes that he has the same hunger for power inside himself, which made İhtiyar a destructive tyrant. The narrator diverts the plot from realism and starts to refer to İhtiyar not as a real man but as an abstract idea: “İhtiyar was not present, he was never present. He was a mental disorder, a pathology. He was Delikanlı himself. He was always in him and people alike; he was with them” (İhtiyar yoktu, olmamıştı. Aslında bir akıl bozukluğu, bir dengesizlikti o. Delikanlı’nın kendisi idi o. Kendisinin ve benzerlerinin içinde idi hep).⁴⁹

48 Buğra, *Gençliğim Eyvah*, 48.

49 Ibid., 274.

The possibility that the sadistic, destructive, and egregiously violent İhtiyar and the naive, upstanding, and loving Raşit are in fact two sides of the same personality, implies that who Raşit has been fighting with literally and figuratively, since the very beginning, was himself. Leaving the reader with the uncertainty of whether İhtiyar is a real person or not, the narration culminates the suspense, but it swiftly becomes clear that this peculiar twist does not reveal the true nature of events. The narrator returns to a realistic mode and assures the reader that İhtiyar is more than just a hallucination. The brief twist, however, communicates that under the sly submission of Raşit, there is an equally flammable power-hungry masculinity that may assume brute power.

Another axis of *Gençliğim Eyvah*, in addition to the violent Oedipal rivalry with the father figure, is the love felt for the controversial sister figure. Using Raşit, Buğra links the pressures of an abusive father to the possibility of liberation that will come with the oppressive control of a woman, which will help a young boy achieve upward mobility in the hierarchy of masculinity. When Raşit's attachment to Güliz diverts his attention away from political action, we find him getting engaged with a self-transformation that will make his personality more attractive to Güliz. This plot brings questions about self-control and the control of others as features of masculinity. Raşit anxiously allows himself to be swallowed and defined by the beliefs and pleasures of Güliz. He burdens himself thinking whether he is a kind of "cultural prostitute," who sells himself to whatever the woman he loves finds acceptable.

Raşit's anxieties of emasculation are further dramatized via İhtiyar's hypermasculinity. İhtiyar's sadism with his first wife proves that he has no mercy even for the ones he loves. İhtiyar eludes the threat to his life with his wife's help, but even the grave danger he found himself in does not change him; his macho behavior prevails. He cold-bloodedly sends his wife to her death. It is only after he meets Güliz, the young instrument to his ambivalent political ambitions, that İhtiyar questions his capacity "to feel" again. İhtiyar's attachment to Güliz is loaded with pedophilic overtones in the novel, although an overt erotic attraction is not exposed in any clear way. The commodification of the girl by İhtiyar, however, suggests a sexual relation because İhtiyar sees Güliz as a woman since her childhood, and makes plans to use her sexuality for attracting young men to his group.

The narration also suggests a metaphorical incest, by treating Raşit and Güliz's attraction to each other as a kind of brother-sister love in this unconventional family. In a twisted sense, İhtiyar is the only capable and powerful "father" Güliz and Raşit could ever have; yet their struggles for self-definition makes him both a favorable and detestable figure for them. İhtiyar's past serves as an alert for his potentially malevolent intervention to the developing relationship between Raşit and Güliz. As rivals for the attention of the same woman, the master, İhtiyar, and his disciple, Raşit, engage in a passionate debate on controversial issues of a political and moral nature. Throughout their discussion, more of Raşit's and İhtiyar's attitudes and biographical details emerge. These details illuminate their attachment to each other, and also their obsession with Güliz.

The second chapter of the novel elaborates on the development of the intimate link between İhtiyar and Güliz. İhtiyar's obsession with the young Güliz suggests another controversial attachment. On the one hand, İhtiyar transforms himself into a father figure and tries to offer the girl shelter and good education. On the other hand, he occasionally gives away the tutelary spirit and acts as a platonic lover toward her. What he feels, the narrator reminds us, is not love but an attraction that resembles the attraction of "an automobile admirer to a Lamborghini" (bir araba delisinin Lamborghini'yi değerlendirdişi).⁵⁰ He experiments with the feelings of the young girl and feels joy at the signs of her weaknesses. Although he sees that his selfish games become emotional torture to Güliz, İhtiyar does not stop. Güliz's hidden anger, which is concealed by her submissiveness, connects the sadist İhtiyar to her.

Güliz is not a very important character in relating the political implications that form the background of *Gençliğim Eyvah*. In the novel, she rather facilitates the entrance to İhtiyar's and Raşit's individual worlds and plays a central role in letting the reader get to know the male characters of the novel. Güliz serves as a plot device, which is used to introduce the evil of İhtiyar and the anxious masculinity of Raşit. The novel deploys Güliz to illustrate the lack of self-confidence in Raşit, as much as it uses her to animate the sadism of İhtiyar. Her presence questions the capacity to trust and love in the moments of acute transformations. The narration briefly covers her

50 Ibid., 83.

childhood and suggests Güliz's inability to properly love. She feels close to Raşit, but not to who he truly is, rather to the man she believes he can truly be. Her strong will to transform him causes Raşit to experience love as a loss of agency and almost as a loss of his masculinity.

In the abusive economy of İhtiyar's tyranny, a mute love develops between Raşit and Güliz. Caught up in İhtiyar's political agenda, both Raşit and Güliz undergo a challenging questioning of themselves, while they also attempt to find a way out of İhtiyar's control. As their love grows, Güliz has startling effects on the attitude and personality of Raşit. Raşit struggles between his feelings for Güliz and his principles. Acting out of character, the normally resolute Raşit finds himself turned into a man who tries to impress Güliz with a bristling masculinity.

Before he gets to know Güliz, Raşit works at a journal as an editor, doing hard work but earning very little. The narrator punctuates his hunger and anxiety for living on such a limited amount of money. His sequence of thoughts yields important clues as to what Raşit thinks of "a real man." As Raşit thinks of his poverty, working-class existence, and lack of capital, he introduces an economic dimension to the problem of masculinity. He praises his low-profile life, and speaks highly of the working-class existence, presenting it as the only honorable alternative. Passing through the famous shopping district İstiklal caddesi during a lunch break, he observes the rich, higher classes in a rage. He thinks how disgusting "the shop windows, and people staring at the shop windows, people in nice suits, young-old-middle-aged women and men" (*vitrinler, vitrinlere bakan güzel giyimli, genç, yaşlı, orta yaşlı kadınlar, erkekler*) seem to him.⁵¹

Raşit's anger for the consumerist culture, the privileged, and the rich mixes with a distaste for Western imports. When a friend insists that they should check out the exhibition in some art gallery, Raşit unwillingly follows. The exhibition of abstract paintings is a metaphor for Turkey's skin-deep Westernism, which causes the elite of the country to imitate and appreciate Western values, ideals, and tastes. Raşit finds such art absurd and unnecessary, and makes fun of the paintings. Standing by each artwork, he talks about his favorite meals and desserts in Turkish cuisine using the art criticism lexicon. When

51 Ibid., 127.

his eyes meet Güliz at the gallery, however, he cannot continue this game. Hearing his culinary art criticism, the young woman approaches Raşit and challenges him.

The discussion continues in an elegant and stylish cafe, which is way beyond Raşit's financial standards. Buğra establishes a moral link between women and luxury as threats to national masculinity, which force men to form a "countersociety" that "subvert the acceptable standards of masculinity."⁵² Raşit's first meeting with Güliz happens to be a brutal reminder of his futile fight against poverty. It also becomes a brutal reminder of his subordinated masculinity when Güliz offers to pay:

The place where the girl said "let's have something" was a luxurious restaurant looking over the Bosphorus, facing Kuzguncuk and Kandilli forests. Without any shame, not giving a damn, as if saying I am out of matches, he said:

"I do not have any money."

Just like him, and as if saying "I have some matches," Güliz said:

"I have money."

Raşit hesitated. He bit his lips once again.

"If you like... I mean, if it will save your masculine pride, I will not pay, I will lend you money for you to pay."

She was laughing. But an extraordinary laughter.⁵³

Güliz's laughter both makes fun of the established position of men's obligation for being superior workers with higher wages, and also expresses the perceived powerlessness of Raşit. This meeting defines a key moment in Raşit's life because, as a man who does not represent masculinity defined through relationships with cash and

52 George Mosse, *Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 68.

53 "Kızın 'oturalım biraz' dediği yer, Kuzguncuk ve Kandilli korularına bakan, Boğaz'ı ayaklar altına almış, lüks gazino idi. Ezilip büzülmeden, umursamadan, kibritim kalmamış der gibi:

'Param yok.'

Güliz de tıpkı onun gibi ve kibrit bende var dercesine:

'Bende var.'

Raşit durakladı. Dişleri dudaklarında yer değiştirdi.

İstersen... yani erkeklik gururunu kurtaracaksa, ismarlamam, borç veririm.' Gülüyordu. Ama bambaşka bir gülüş." Buğra, *Gençliğim Eyvah*, 130.

consumption, he recognizes that a relationship with Güliz will require him to forge a new identity.

The change happens quickly but with complications. When İhtiyar arranges for him a better paying job, Raşit finds himself questioning the rapid change of his standards. He compares and contrasts his poor life before Güliz with his new life dominated by “shop windows, luxurious restaurants, dining rooms that serve tea and spirits in a Western and modern way, patisseries, and cafes” (vitrinler, lüks lokantalar, Batılı ve çağdaş yöntemlerle çay veya içki servisi yapılan gazinolar, pasta salonları, cafeler).⁵⁴ What filters through his memories of his previous life is a number of events, including his being directed principally by hunger. The change he undergoes, Raşit thinks, is not dictated by his established hunger after years-long poverty, but by something alien to him:

One and a half months ago, the sizzles and scents of kofana or bonito or horse mackerel or anchovy were stimulating not only the ones in his mouth but all of his secretory tissues, barbarically. But he used to have chin bones then...his nostrils used to have stretch caps that extend as if pulled by a pincer [...] What about now? That is to say, after Güliz? [...] Now what betrays him is not only his secretory tissues but something more treacherous, more rebellious.⁵⁵

Raşit's anxiety makes it apparent that such an abject submission is foreign to him. The alien pressure comes from falling in love and giving entire control to a woman. Buğra makes it clear that this pressure gets shaped under the impetus of modernity and its concomitant ideology of romantic love, which are “imported” to Turkey. There is “a transformation of intimacy” hidden in Turkey's modernization, and this is an emasculating change.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ibid., 147.

⁵⁵ “Bir buçuk ay öncesine kadar, bu kofana veya palamut veya istavrit veya hamsi cızırtıları ile kokuları, yalnız ağızındakileri değil, bütün salgı bezlerini gaddarca tahrik ederdi. Ama çene kemikleri vardı o zaman... kerpetenle çekilmiş gibi gerilen kapakları vardı burun deliklerinin. [...] Peki ya şimdi? Yani Güliz'den sonra? [...] Şimdi ona ihanet eden yalnız salgı bezleri değildi, daha kalles daha başına buyruk bir şeydi.” Ibid., 146–47.

⁵⁶ Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

In Theweleit's two-volume study *Male Fantasies*, a similar mechanism of the control of the body (and libido) is outlined for soldier males.

Theweleit notes that male soldiers are incapable of intimacy with other people because of their fear of dissolution and identity loss. Buğra links Raşit's fear of dissolution to Turkey's fear of disintegration. The discussion on Raşit's struggles becomes a questioning of "colonial subordination," tracing the changes in the cultural climate of Turkey along Westernization, with a specific emphasis on the struggle between stereotypes of the past and the present. Although Turkey is never colonized, in the literal sense, Westernization qualifies as a case of "cultural colonization" because dramatic changes occurred in cultural patterns during the process of modernization. Buğra links Raşit's struggles partly to this radical change and the split of Turkey between the past and the present. This link attaches the story to the "nervous condition" that is beneath the colonized subject's masculinity.⁵⁷ Buğra locates Turkey's modernization during a crucial moment, when normative categories of gender identity revealed themselves as problematic and the relationship between men and women became strained.

Raşit pushes himself into an exploration of his masculinity. A popular look at the image of "the weak man" and patriarchal expectations of masculinity become major contributors to his anxious self-inspection. Raşit resists changing in order to win the love of Güliz, but he transforms himself despite his will. In his reflections about the change he undergoes, the novel presents a challenging discussion of romantic love as "emasculatation." Immersed in the world of Güliz, wondering endlessly and vaguely how to impress her, Raşit fails to decide whether such excessive concern for a woman is emasculating. He attempts to replace the homosocial bond of friendship and his debt to İhtiyar with a heterosexual bond of responsibility over Güliz, since the acquisition of a woman, in his vision, serves as the indicator of masculine adulthood. However, the girl resists being owned and ruled. As he recalls his former poor-but-proud masculinity and negotiates his current insecure masculinity in transition, Raşit falls in a crisis of power. We find him desperately trying to become a

57 Jean Paul Sartre, "Preface to Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*," in *Wretched of the Earth* by Frantz Fanon (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 20.

decision maker. He interferes with Güliz's decisions about clothes and makeup, tells her what not to wear, and praises the beauty of simplicity, forcing Güliz to comply with his taste. As they get to know each other, Raşit puts aside his "lonely man pride," and accepts Güliz into his life even in her extravagant style.⁵⁸

Meanwhile, Raşit discovers that his professor and Güliz's adoptive father are, in fact, the same person. Obtaining bits and pieces of information about the underground group, Raşit slowly grasps that he is just an instrument in the hands of İhtiyar. He suspects his relationship to Güliz is a setup that he did not notice before. En route to reclaiming their freedom from İhtiyar's political agenda, Raşit and Güliz also question their intimate attachment to each other. Despite her strong feelings for Raşit, Güliz keeps spying on him to İhtiyar, in line with İhtiyar's orders. This leaves it unclear, until the very end of the novel, whether Güliz really loves Raşit or if she is fooling him, acting as if she was in love, in order to be able to fulfill her duties as an informant. The tension of the novel is built on Güliz's dangerous double-crossing, which leaves the readers in doubt: will she break her vow of obedience and betray the secret clique of İhtiyar for Raşit, or will she betray the man in love with her?

Two dramatic murders coalesce in the novel's closing scene. Güliz decides to poison İhtiyar to prove her love to Raşit, and to free Raşit and herself from İhtiyar's authority. She thinks murder is their last chance because İhtiyar would never let them break their link to him and pursue their lives. She ventures to İhtiyar's well-protected villa in search of a new beginning. Raşit, however, inadvertently interferes with Güliz's plan and comes to the villa of İhtiyar as well. İhtiyar suspects Güliz's behavior but drinks the poisonous tea that she serves him. He somehow understands her ulterior motive and succeeds in shooting Güliz before she leaves the room. He also wounds Raşit, who arrives at the villa and rushes to the dead body of Güliz, hearing the gunshot. Next to the corpse of the woman he loves, Raşit witnesses İhtiyar's painful fight with death. The interesting detail in this murder plot is that Raşit reproduces İhtiyar's indifference to the sacrifices of his wife: Güliz putting herself in danger resembles the sacrifice of İhtiyar's wife, and Raşit's letting her go is, in fact, another version of İhtiyar's cold-blooded murder of his wife.

58 Buğra, *Gençliğim Eyvah*, 147.

Once again it becomes possible to think of Raşit and İhtiyar as differently-aged versions of the same person, who meet in a distinct period of history. The end of the novel consolidates the overlap. The novel ends as Raşit attends the funeral of İhtiyar. Although he finds himself filled with remorse, Raşit knows that his personal agency is not enough for the revival of the fortunes of his country. Surrounded by notables of academic life, bureaucrats, famous businessmen, and politicians, together with hundreds and thousands of young people at the funeral ceremony, Raşit recognizes that İhtiyar is triumphant despite his demise, for his kingdom of anarchy will prevail as long as new servants are eager to take the place of those who leave. *Gençliğim Eyvah* ends with a suspenseful mood, leaving the question whether Raşit will choose to continue the legacy of İhtiyar. Having witnessed the death of the woman he loves, Raşit experiences great grief and pain during the funeral. After the ceremony, however, he decides to go to the favorite restaurant of İhtiyar. His going back to the restaurant suggests that he may be the new İhtiyar, the new brute leader of the underground group, the person he already was deep inside.

Famous literary critic Fethi Naci labels *Gençliğim Eyvah* as a propaganda book fueled with anticommunism.⁵⁹ In the initial parts of the novel where the narrator speaks of political chaos, bombings, and killings, no partisan political rhetoric is present. It seems as if the novel did not have any political claims, because İhtiyar describes destruction as the only solution, no matter what is being destroyed. As the story propagates, however, Buğra often digresses from the story, cloaks himself with the narrator or İhtiyar, and speaks his mind about the state of chaos in the country and the premises of Marxism. That turns a lengthy part of the novel into an angry political monologue. *Gençliğim Eyvah* uses themes familiar from the works of other right-wing novelists of March 12, such as leftists' disseminating hatred and anarchy. The Oedipalization of the political atmosphere of March 12 and the insistence on ambivalent intimacies between the characters help to stigmatize the leftist revolutionaries, some of whom were organized in urban guerilla groups and attempted to resist the system by means of destruction similar to that of its subjects. The political monologues, angry speeches, and elements such as the two

59 Fethi Naci, *Yüzyılın 100 Türk Romanı* (Istanbul: Adam Yayınları, 2000), 364.

recurring plots of murder by poison foreshadow the novel's successful exploration of men. Still, Buğra succeeds in highlighting the confusion of his protagonist.

Gençliğim Eyvah is a dramatic portrait of the damage a father can do to his son. It discusses masculinity as a capacity to destroy, rule, and govern, and dramatizes the son's final insistence to follow his passion, instead of his father's. It is also the story of a sexual contest between the young and virile Delikanlı and the old İhtiyar over a woman. The novel's discussion of masculine maturation in line with the struggles of emotionally scarred sons coming to terms with an abusive father figure brings individual agency to the fore as the principal masculine feature. The sexual contest over Güliz between an insecure young man and an effete old man punctuates the agency problem. The crisis of masculinity represented in the image of Raşit erupts as he recognizes his inability to be a decisionmaker. Raşit fails to challenge İhtiyar's abusive power, and he finds himself captured by a powerful desire to be an authoritarian and all-powerful man just like him. As a man whose life was dominated by poverty before getting to know Güliz, Raşit's struggle with masculinity gets intertwined with economic stability as well. Although Fethi Naci's specification of the novel's anticommunism is accurate and well-reasoned considering the writer's political orientation and conservatism, it is also important to take into consideration that in *Gençliğim Eyvah*, the main figure İhtiyar, who criticizes Marxism and revolutionary leftism, is a diabolical and negative figure. This is a significant reminder, which points out that the political criticism in the novel should be evaluated carefully. *Gençliğim Eyvah* provides very important clues to the critics that propose that the critical energy move beyond political discussions in order to understand the real motives of March 12 novels.

Conclusion

Politics has never been an unexceptional ingredient in Turkish literature. Literary critic Sibel Irzik affirms the political nature of Turkish fiction, using H. B. Stendhal's pistol shot metaphor: "even in the modern Turkish novels that place themselves more squarely with the mainstream Western novelistic tradition of narrating the evolution of an authentic subjectivity, politics has never been a pistol shot in the middle of a concert."¹ The Turkish literature of the 1970s reflects a strong contribution from writers who explore individuals' struggles with fragmented identities and political deadlocks. Not only March 12 novels, but also others published in the ten-year period between 1970 and 1980 play a conspicuous role in the exploration of identity in politics and its fluxes. I consider the overall literature of this period as a well-established look at the psycho-political drama of masculinity. Literature from those years was already heavily influenced by social, political, and psychological conflicts, but the March 12 novels hit the stands with an elevated interest in questions of power and belonging.² They not only provided a critical look at the recent history of the country, but also an acute analysis of the political chaos of the 1970s.

The putatively canonical body of March 12 novels are stories of a dark period in Turkish history. They take readers skillfully, and very intimately, into the traumatized world of 1970s Turkey and explore the simultaneous desire and disavowal against militarized, hegemo-

1 Sibel Irzik, "Allegorical Lives: The Public and the Private in the Modern Turkish Novel." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 2 (2003): 551.

2 There were individuals with their own narrative projects as well. Oğuz Atay's tales of disconnectedness, Yusuf Atılgan's stories of alienation, Orhan Kemal and Erol Toy's working-class sagas, Yaşar Kemal's Anatolian magical realism, Kemal Tahir's historiographical novels and, of course, women authors' works, such as Leyla Erbil's exploration of women who resist being defenseless objects of male desire and Kerime Nadir, Muazzez Tahsin Berkant, and Peride Celal's popular romances were also important pillars of the literature of the 1970s.

nic, and hypermasculinities. Against the background of the revolutionary uprising and the conservative reaction it encountered, a whole society is presented in these works through varying ideas and actions. It is important to see that individuals do not, for the most part, get lost in this collectivity. They are given dimensions of development and growth, and their suffering is portrayed, along with all the ups and downs they encounter.

March 12 novels occupy a distinguished place in the history of contemporary fiction of Turkey because of their pioneering role in implementing eyewitness testimonies of the military intervention into literature. This aspect of the corpus cannot be denied or downgraded. Without the terror and the memories of the events surrounding the coup, these novels would not be the same. Although both the historical frame of reference and the internal time frame of most of the March 12 novels are littered with the events of 1970s in Turkey, these books are not simply fallouts from the military intervention. They are built on haunting stories of individuality and fear, a delicate inward look, and a challenging criticism of the Turkish culture from a gender perspective.

Writers of the 1970s, including March 12 novelists, locate the distinction between the individual and the society as the broadest problem and focus on the horrors the individuals faced as they lost their will to resist oppressive powers, and as the society was traumatized under military forces. Masculinity is a striking concern in March 12 novels, and it initiates broader criticism than the military's discontinuation of politics because the society is also an invasive agency. March 12 novels expose the problem of essentialism within conceptions of masculinity and the fear of emasculation that remains vivid in men's narratives. All novels abound with men who seek a stable masculinity, yet are unable to see clearly what that is.

In tones ranging from soulful to provocative, and from didactic to whimsical, the nine novels that constitute the study of this book draw a stunning picture of the March 12 period, an interval when "psychological categories have become political categories."³ Some of them plead, while some others shock. In one way or another, they are political novels, which comment on a specific set of realities and ignore

3 Herbert Marcuse, "Preface" *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974), xxvii.

the others. There is a legitimate sociopolitical criticism in March 12 novels, which convincingly capture the flavor of a country under political violence and oppressive military rule, and paint a vivid and nuanced portrait of radicals and reactionaries tussling over political issues. Some novels reduce complicated conflicts to simple duels, while others confess the incommensurability of the perspectives available to the people. The crucial point in analyzing these novels is that they have different ideological sympathies toward the events of March 12. It is remarkable how they make readers confront the questions produced by the historic events of March 12 and also push them to answer questions about power and authority.

The portrayal of the political struggles in March 12 novels raises questions beyond those struggles, because they probe us on many levels. These novels are concerned with different questions within the framework of their politically aware historicism: What is power? Why do people abuse it? What are the responsibilities of the strong toward the weak? What makes a man powerful? How can a man obtain power and protect it? Does masculinity automatically bring destructiveness? There are also questions posed by taking women's attachments to power: Are women, by definition, powerless? Do men have a monopoly on power? How do women gain power, and what should they do to protect it? The novels further ask: How are power and masculinity tied together? How do hierarchies of class and status built around masculinity? Are these hierarchies static or in flux? These questions are not simple and easily answered. They are tied to the philosophical, cultural and political systems, which exist in our contemporary world.

March 12 novels informed people when mass media was censored and selective in the content and quality of its coverage. They were calling out to people to open their eyes to the events surrounding them. Some writers from the March 12 period may have been criticized for their journalistic writing, but the novels should simply be read as novels. The caliber of fiction cannot depend on the extent of its "honesty." To fend off fascist initiatives during the upheavals of the 1970s, priority was given to keeping political solidarity alive, which made many different features of March 12 novels uninteresting to literary critics. During the havoc, it was hard not to use the lens of politics as the primary means to examine literature, which

explains the critics' focus on Marxist terminology and their insistence on reading March 12 novels as texts that are inescapably subject to a question of "truth."

Reading March 12 novels with an attempt to find how much of them represent the truth, however, misses several important features of these novels, including how they inscribe hierarchies of otherness, negotiate power, appeal for liberties and alternatives, discuss what love for people and country means, and question the role of the modern individual in modern collectivities. The individual in the March 12 novels is the very site of trauma and the locus of power and collectivity at the same time. What previous interpretations failed to grasp is that a critique of gender identity, in particular masculine identity, is present at the heart of the books. Several critics and scholars of Turkish literature have noted in broad lines that March 12 literature chronicled the sufferings of the victims but few paid attention to the gender troubles that lay beneath the victimization. Such a critical perspective was unsettling in the 1970s, when any interest outside *economie politique* was considered an implicit critique of Marxism. This set of values has left gender aside as a feature that does not offer an analytical position in the examination of literary texts. The politically polarized literary criticism of the 1970s has preferred to focus on the accuracy of the writer's look at the events.

There is no doubt that these texts cannot be separated from their political context, but March 12 novels and their criticisms are questionable, because they do not fit into the frame constructed by the critics. These novels can be characterized as class-conscious, political, and historiographical works of fiction, but it is important to note that they are not hamstrung by either the "truths" of class, or those of politics and history. Looking at March 12 novels from the fringe of the position of a politically motivated period in Turkish history gives the opportunity to see their intricately woven inner structures. These structures do not bring text and history together in a singular and monolithic way; instead, there is a vindication and challenge at the same time, of archetypes and definitions that are historically and culturally determined. The modern bourgeois idea of "the individual" gets discussed next to the Marxist model of base-superstructure and the existential idea of reaching a deeper level of the meaning of life. To alleviate the despair of tyrannies, many writers turn to the

realm of the corporal, and attempt to restore dignity to the individuals via their material existence and bodily sensations. This liberationist discourse both situates individuals as a byproduct of historical accents of oppression and resistance, and also sees them as loci for power.

Once this complexity is recognized, it also becomes easy to understand the influence of these novels on readers, as they abound in ideas about self, subjectivity, ideology, and so on. March 12 novels do not merely reflect the historical and cultural circumstances from which they emerge, but they also influence them, by destabilizing positions imposed on people by historical, cultural, and political structures. The narratives possess contrasting truths and modes of thought, and question what people of rival political engagements, different generations, and varying classes should expect of one another. They also project a vague discussion of democracy on the relationship between state and individuals, who in the specific settings of March 12 happen to be citizens of a country reigned by a patriarchal, authoritarian, and persecutory culture.

March 12 novels span the entire social hierarchy, from the high- and upper-middle-class bourgeoisie to the child workers that fall to the bottom. The scale of their lenses extends from the intimate links between nuclear families, lovers, “comrades” and “greywolves,” to a panoramic look at the network of links in a collection of diverse people. Their dramatic themes range from the position of the individual in society against an oppressive state power to the political, social, and moral responsibility of individuals and their desperate need for recognition. The red scare, student uprisings, increase of ethnic tensions, and gender struggles function as plot lines for the texts, and they immerse the reader into questions about individuality. March 12 novels contain stories that give evidence of the friction between the forces of the personal and the impersonal, and appear as vibrant and exciting catalogues of masculinities. These aspects of the novels did not figure prominently in their reception in Turkey.

March 12 novels provide a challenge to the predominantly traditionalist culture of Turkey, which had failed to recognize the plight of the broken-down man as anything other than cowardice. Gender is the overlooked center of gravity, which questions pre-existing notions of masculinity under the historical burden that politicizes gender

relations. The incendiary rhetoric of previous readings of March 12 novels underestimate their stake in gender. However, closer examination shows that the novels are a complex mixture of a sexual-social-political critique with a testimonial historiography of the events surrounding 12 March 1971. The writers of these novels, in imagining the intricate and vividly rendered social world, use discourses of masculinity as a powerful means to represent a range of power and oppression.

As a general remark, it can be said that the representations of masculinity in the novels are not monolithic but fluid, diverse, and fraught with ambiguity. The evocation of manliness is largely anxious: masculinity is reviewed in the face of traumatic memories, street clashes, torture, and incarceration, which symbolically constitute an abridged account of the events of March 12. What we have in these novels is an image of manhood that is unquestionably impaired, and there is a sinister rhetoric of gender under this impairment. Of the nine novels central to this study, it is Çetin Altan's *Büyük Gözaltı* that most simply links the patriarchal "law of the father" to the oppressive "law of the state." Based on a mechanism of remembrance moving back and forth in time, *Büyük Gözaltı* illustrates a young boy's growth into adulthood with a story intertwined with a theatrical custody experienced for political causes in his adult years. This novel draws attention to the efforts of cultural policing inherent in social structures and institutions such as the family, school, and the state. Prison is another institution that becomes part of the story, adding the specific shade of March 12, and bringing the issue of political persecution to the forefront.

The theme of political persecution gets elaborated in Erdal Öz's *Yaralısin* and Melih Cevdet Anday's *İsa'nın Güncesi*, both of which revolve around the problem of victimization as a public exhibition in which the persecuted constitute a direct warning example. With a brisk narrative style, Öz's novel illustrates a torture survivor trying to overcome his trauma. *Yaralısin* extends the war for power between the military and civilians to the struggle between all civil but power-hungry masculinities. *İsa'nın Güncesi* deals with brutality and torture allegorically, combining surrealism with a suspenseful noir and psychological insecurity. These novels put manhood under pressure and transform it. There are two contrasting masculinities in the novels,

which relativize the state of being a man. With the complementary appearances of secondary characters, all three narratives raise a discussion on the problematic border between hypermasculinity and hypo-masculinity. An arresting exploration of the human psyche and masculine virtues also accompanies this discussion.

Büyük Gözaltı, *Yaralısın*, and *İsa'nın Güncesi* negotiate the potential of masquerades to challenge political and social reality. Their emphasis is not, as previous critics have suggested, on the heroes who grow bigger in their violent encounter with oppression, but rather on the “feminization” of men under pressure and their struggles to deal with this situation. They deal with the terror of being crushed and rendered impotent by the more powerful, and illustrate how it becomes clear through the resolution of this fear that masculinity the most consists of conditioned reflexes. What typifies masculinity the most in these texts is the defensiveness taken in response to vulnerability. Enduring fear and pain are defined as proper masculine values, and the protagonists attempt to avoid gender insecurity by masquerades of masculinity when they feel weak. The protagonists show an unlikely willingness to discuss their unmanly lack of power. In this discussion, they implicitly suggest an alternative masculinity guided with intellect rather than muscle power, which alludes to the drama of the March 12 coup, and symbolically stands for the cogent fight of the intelligentsia with the militaristic way of solving problems.

Men, regardless of their political orientation, obtain masculinity through engagement with some roles of toughness. Such a role is neither particular to the period, nor confined to Turkey. However, in these examples of March 12 novels, it is closely connected to the heightened atmosphere of political clashes, and the oppressiveness of the military coup. “Toughness” and “intellect” settle in a complex superiority/inferiority framework in the novels. Men who support violence and engage in destructive acts do not get hurt, but the hesitation of the male characters to adopt the traditional role of a “macho man” demonstrates that it is an inferior masculinity when compared to masculinity based on intellect. Intellectual men hesitate to embrace excessive destructive concerns when responding to oppressive institutions, such as the police or the education system.

Women writers engage with this duality in a more detailed manner. They mine through the historical–political narrative of March 12, and reach deeper levels in their search for the roots of the hunger for power. They desacralize the victim position and explore the macho hidden in the male victim. Sevgi Soysal’s *Şafak* deals with police brutality in its simple reality, and also casts a critical eye at the potentially destructive and disabling side of feudal culture in the settings of the martial law period. Similar to Sevgi Soysal’s exploration of human relationships as imprisoning power hierarchies in *Şafak*, Pınar Kür also critically engages with the abuse of power in her debut novel *Yarın Yarın*. Pınar Kür’s *Yarın Yarın* delves into the female appropriation of domination, oppression, and pain, illustrating the illicit love affair between a bourgeois man who dedicates himself to revolution and an unhappy woman who lives within a stale marriage contract. Both novels punctuate that the image of “the victimized revolutionary” may be a cover for a masculinity that pushes women to secondary positions. They explore how women have to adopt traditional male roles and struggle in denying their own desires for the sake of their ideological attachments. *Şafak* and *Yarın Yarın* challenge the association of women with the private sphere of home and family, and the association of men with the public sphere of politics. With a feminist perspective with Marxist overtones, they turn to bourgeois morality, patriarchal traditions, and the socio-economic structures as the sources of sexual repression. They also draw attention to the fact that oppression cannot be adequately apprehended either within the dramatic March 12 military-civil dichotomy or within the conceptual limits of the Marxian theoretical frame.

Traditional values, which *Şafak* and *Yarın Yarın* try to debunk, appear as valuables to be protected at the expense of losing certain freedoms. While *Şafak* and *Yarın Yarın* look at the events of March 12 from a perspective sympathetic of revolutionary leftism, *Sancti* and *Zor* display patterns of affiliation to conservatism and nationalism, and a profound distaste for class-based politics. Equating the confusion of gender roles with decadence, *Sancti* and *Zor* turn to the moral misery that comes with what they present as revolutionism. Masculinities in these novels are simply divided into good and bad. Emine Işınsu and Sevinç Çokum ignore right-wing extremism, which

mounted a violent campaign of intimidation aimed at the leftist insurgency, and sketch the atmosphere of chaos solely as a result of left-wing violence. Işınsu's *Sançı* argues that conventional femininity should be protected, since women in men's clothes bring nothing but pain to their lives. She deals with the escalation of political violence among young people, due to their powerful dedication to ideologies, and comments on how they sacrifice themselves for political causes. The novel is based around the story of a tomboyish young girl getting trapped in an illegal revolutionary group. Çokum's *Zor* also evaluates girls in the roles traditionally associated with boys as an assault to the traditional culture, and argues that pseudo-families can never be a remedy for the disintegration of family ties in modern times. Çokum gives voice to a bulk of people whose lives cut across regional, class, and religious lines in a big city, and punctuates the clash of rural and urban cultures as the main problem beneath the troubles of March 12. The novel clearly shows that a boy's experience of gender is determined by the position he occupies within the intersection of provincial, class, and generational categories.

It is interesting to note that writers of the right wing also seem to agree that capitalism exploits people. Both Işınsu's *Sançı* and Çokum's *Zor* show that capital reduces everything and everyone to exchange value. The novels portray poor working-class men of rural origin whose families struggle with economic problems. They combine tyrannies of economic inequalities to gender and show the hierarchy between wealthy men and the poor, but do not elaborate on the gendered oppressions of patriarchy. Although they engage in a parallel critique of the limits of capitalism, right-wing writers hesitate to search beyond those limits. The notion of difficulty to break away from circumstances is emphasized in both novels, and stories advocate staying in pre-assigned boundaries as a better solution. Işınsu and Çokum write about the way the "revolutionary left" is corrupting Turkish culture. They voice a call to protect the gender status quo, "the God-given order of nature," and to stop trying to fit women between the lines of male tradition. They deal with issues of female empowerment, but fail to explore the psychological reactions of women to the domination forced on them.

In *Şafak*, *Yarın Yarın*, *Sançı*, and *Zor* there are men who are representative of great ideas and principles, and men who are vulnerable

individuals with all their anxieties and contradictions. Women settle between two powerful poles of politics. They serve as the arena where the ideologies meet and clash. All four novels contain the concept of hegemony in triangles. We find the protagonists, three women and one child worker, in an ideological whirlpool, captured between two conflicting powers, which provide the readers with a contrasting focus on masculinity. Different masculinities linked to rival political ideologies court the protagonists, while their fierce fight terrorizes them. The protagonists try to bind their fate with one of the camps, and they also question the internal hierarchies and rules of belonging. Sometimes we find the protagonist already tilted toward one wing, but still questioning his/her belonging. At other times, the protagonist is courted and pressured simultaneously, and the narration is built on his/her indecision between the camps. The conflicting interests of the rivaling political wings vividly depict the throes of March 12, and this tripartite game illustrates the burden left on individuals by the upheavals.

These novels underline that hierarchies organize patriarchal culture. In their analyses of the geometries of patriarchy, *Şafak*, *Yarın Yarın*, *Sancı*, and *Zor* expose the devious political ends of imitating and performance. The narrations cast a critical eye on women who try to fit themselves in masculine performances, and also on men who try to adjust themselves to the norms displayed by the models that they imitate, in order to have a more favorable position in the power hierarchy. The novels abound in observations that the gendered power hierarchy benefits men the most. However, there is also an effort to emphasize that imitating hegemonic models of masculinity brings higher chances for upward mobility on the power pyramid. In the stories of *Şafak* and *Sancı*, masculinization of women in the leftist revolutionary movement appears as an important axis of the narration. In *Yarın Yarın* and *Zor*, a dark atmosphere of masculine anxieties prevails and introduces disturbing questions about being “manly.” Anxieties for complying with the standards of hegemonic masculinity strongly echo in the struggles of the male characters.

The last two novels analyzed in this book also circle around anxieties of men. *Gençliğim Eyvah* explores a young man’s struggle for power and tries to link the political aggression of the 1970s to a

need for masculine affirmation. The search in *Gençliğim Eyvah* of the “true warrior” brings forth new questions on masculinity. Buğra introduces us to the working-class life of a young man, who torments himself asking if excessive concern for a woman is in itself emasculating. The narration also casts a critical eye on the young man’s love for his hero, his role model, and examines the ties of conformity that make him sacrifice his individual identity and become an obedient and passive man. *Bir Düğün Gecesi* portrays the aftermath of the collapse of revolutionary utopias. It illustrates a wedding night where men and women of different classes meet, and position themselves, even within the cozy atmosphere of the party, as subjects to be ordered around by the military figures attending the wedding. The father of the groom is a general, whose masculinity defines the hierarchical chain of masculinities, in which men in the party try to find their respective positions. These novels provide a basis for rethinking the violent clashes of the period in terms of masculinity because they evaluate the specific settings of March 12 as the crucible of masculinity. They critically explore men’s group identity and expose how patterns of fraternities crisscross with a military ethos.

Gençliğim Eyvah and *Bir Düğün Gecesi* complement one another thematically, since both position March 12 in a historical and cultural continuum and relate it to the anxieties of modernization in Turkey. They recognize the centrality of masculinity in the cultural patterns that emerged during Turkey’s westernization. They show how strongly the cultural production of masculinity is intertwined with an obsession with the definition of effeminacy, and in which ways this framework produces unstable images of male authority torn into pieces in the magnetism of ideologies. The debasement of the leftist youth and intellectuals, and their particular attempts to understand the reasons for being pushed to the peripheries of society have a central role in these two novels. *Gençliğim Eyvah* advocates for a genuinely Turkish masculinity, defining this identity with references to hard work, complicity to traditions, and being in total control. *Bir Düğün Gecesi* explicates these very premises to see how closely they match with a militaristic ethos.

March 12 novels question blind commitment to a specific ideology along some pre-assigned rules, and explore the confusions that

revolve around “believing” and “knowing.” They conduct an exploration of the forces that bind people into groups and, at the same time, deal with their protagonists’ perception of moral and emotional dilemmas. In the stories, the questioning of allegiance is not limited to what the state means, and how loyalty to it should be defined, but it includes thinking about every kind of oppressive authority, whether social or cultural, that makes “toys” out of people. This brings with itself a questioning of the male appetite for battle as well. Images of men afraid of pain indicate that there is a psychological cost of learning to oppress and destroy. They show that men do not have an essential monopoly on traditionally “masculine” virtues of toughness, aggression, and the willingness to use force, but they learn and imitate such roles. March 12 novels reveal men’s hesitation while asserting the injustices of the victimization of the less powerful, but they do not offer solutions to the problem. By showing the ambivalence of men against embracing violence, however, they throw doubt on the association of manhood with violence.

The duality between hypermasculinity and hypo-masculinity defines the key avenue that this book traversed in its analysis of the fictionalization of men and masculinity in March 12 novels. Images of masculinity in these novels tread an uneasy line between occupying subject and object positions. There is a narrative of duality and emasculation in all of the novels. The central focus is an opposition (capitalist/socialist or greywolf/revolutionary or urban/rural), which serves as a manner to juxtapose a failed masculinity to the successful and acceptable one. The macho is not the acceptable masculinity, but the weakling is not, either. The dissonance between the community’s expectations and the protagonist’s behavior politicizes the intricate issue of freedom in the novels. It brings to the fore questions about manners to resist oppressive powers that attempt to set limits on it.

The protagonists seek to sustain the virtues of “toughness,” despite the fact that their commanders/torturers seem to celebrate the very same quality. Their dilemma surfaces the cultural schizophrenia of referring to masculinity both as a domain of opposition and of oppression: a man who oppresses is “manly,” but a man who opposes to this oppression powerfully is “manly” as well. March 12

novels indicate that gender may emerge as powerful and repressive, while at other times, it unleashes possibilities of a heroic resistance. The shifts in the patriarchal ideology of 1970s Turkey produce unstable masculinities, which find themselves between the state of embracing an impaired masculinity and the state of asserting potency against oppressors. Characters are split into these two states of masculinity, and the novels address the problems which beset the attempt to form a unified and stable masculine identity.

Men's approach to masculinity provides a deep glimpse into the inner psychological reality of manhood, while women's approach expands the concept beyond the narrow cultural confines. Both reenact the oppressive aspects of the masculinity of their times, and look critically at a normative and essentialist masculinity. Female writers tackle better the male and female collusion with power. The female guard Zafer in Sevgi Soysal's *Şafak*, the inauspicious Leyla in Emine İşinsu's *Sanrı*, and the tomboyish Seyda in Pınar Kür's *Yarın Yarın* show that men cannot monopolize the hegemonic masculine ethos. Women writers' views of that period show that they recognize women's plight under different, yet fundamentally similar oppressive masculinities, and that they also see women's crucial roles in the foundation of such a culture. They show that associations of men grow more powerful only with support from women. There is an interesting divide here, because women are seen as decision-making individuals even in their passive role as conduits of male exchange. While women writers use specific female figures to comment on this issue, male writers do not descry the destructive masculine figures in their fiction individually at all. Most of them prefer to leave them anonymous. It is women writers again, who identify the abuse of power; men, such as the police officer Zekeriya and his sidekick Abdullah in Sevgi Soysal's *Şafak*, or the general Hayrettin Özkan and Korean war veteran Ertürk in Adalet Ağaoğlu's *Bir Düşün Gecesi*, provide the reader with resolute images of hunger for power.

In their assessment of the ways masculinities come into existence, writers of March 12 clarify a culture of gender difference, in which both men and women play their exclusive roles. The novels move beyond the conventional concept of a single and uniform masculinity that associates privilege and power with "masculinity" in an un-

problematic way. The recognition of the existence of multiple masculinities, however, also surfaces common denominators between them. A discussion of hegemonic norms of masculinity prevails in the novels, and male subjects critically look at their accomplishments to see if they fit into the category of hegemonic masculinity. There is a destabilization of pre-established categories of gender as a result of this self-inspection.

I want to conclude with Roland Barthes' famous adage "a little formalism turns one away from history, but a lot brings one back to it."⁴ Seeing gender as part of the picture in the analysis of the March 12 novels is like turning to history because of "a lot of formalism." Only with this turn does it become possible to see how historically and culturally constructed definitions of gender transformed our understanding of what it meant to be a man and to be a woman. Gender is implicitly present within the seemingly innocent definitions of cultural archetypes, and it also influences how challenges to the identity politics are figured out. Oppressive figures of men and women complement the scenario, leaving the reader perplexed with the question as to what counts as a representative characteristic of gender. Each of the novels explored in this study adds to the larger story of power and patriarchy in its particular fashion, and uses masculinity as a rhetorical device, a figure of speech for understanding social, political, and economic conflicts.

Turning to history is never complete. While this book was in development, several people who witnessed the upheavals of the 1970s put an end to their silence, and in interviews or autobiographies they made their memories of the events public.⁵ Memoirs of Nihat Erim, the president of the interim government of March 12, were decoded from tapes he had previously recorded and published in book form in 2007.⁶ Previously classified documents related to U.S. foreign policy regarding Turkey from the period between 1969

4 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 112.

5 Tuba Çandar, *Murat Belge: Bir Hayat* [Murat Belge: A Life] (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2007); Mine Söğüt, *Aşkın Sonu Cinayettir: Pınar Kür ile Hayat ve Edebiyat* [End of life is murder: Life and literature with Pınar Kür] (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2004).

6 Nihat Erim, *12 Mart Anıları* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2007).

and 1976 have recently been made public by the authorities.⁷ Some recent studies of oral history and (auto)biographical books on the events of 1970s started to broaden our knowledge about the upheavals of the period.⁸ There is an interest both within the academy and outside of it about historical details of the military intervention of March 12.⁹ These accounts are promising to break the silence and attract attention to this chapter in the history of Turkey, which was ignored for a long time. They are little cracks on a longstanding wall, but the wall is made of glass, and once it cracks, it will eventually shatter. It is likely that this will help increase the number of studies on March 12 novels.

7 See "Greece; Cyprus; Turkey," Foreign Relations of the United States, vol. XXX. United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 2007. Available at <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v30>.

8 Talat Turhan, *12 Mart Cezaevinden Mektuplar* [March 12 Letters from Prison] (Istanbul: İleri Yayıncılık, 2008); Mine Söğüt, *Darbeli Kalemler 27 Mayıs–12 Mart–12 Eylül* [Couped Pens May 27, March 12, September 12] (Istanbul: Getto Yayınevi, 2010); Ertuğrul Kürkçü, *İsyanın İzinde* [En Route of revolt] (Istanbul: DipNot Yayınları, 2013); İlbay Kahraman, *Fırtınalı Denizin Yolcuları: Sedat Göçmen Kitabı* [Passengers of the stormy sea: A book on Sedat Göçmen] (Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2013).

9 Serra Ciliz, "Between Belonging and Opposition: Life Story Narratives of Women from the Generation of '78," Master's thesis, Sabancı University, 2002; Narin Bağdatlı Vural, "The Social Memory and Experience of the Generation of '78," Ph.D thesis, Mimar Sinan University, 2011; Sezen Çilengir, "International Diffusion of Opinions and Practices: Occupations of Universities in Turkey between 1968 and 1970," Master's thesis, Dokuz Eylül University, 2011.

Chronology of Events Surrounding Three Military Coups in Turkey

- 27 May 1960* – First coup d'état in Turkey against the democratically elected government.
- 19 August 1960* – British colonial rule in Cyprus ends, and Turkey becomes one of the guarantors of the independent republic.
- 13 February 1961* – Labor Party of Turkey is founded (Türkiye İşçi Partisi, TİP).
- 16 September 1961* – Former Prime Minister Adnan Menderes and his two ministers are executed after a mock trial.
- 10 October 1965* – Democracy is restored with elections (AP 240 seats, CHP 134 seats, TİP 15 seats).
- 21 April 1967* – Military intervention in Greece.
- 19 September 1967* – Prime Minister Demirel visits the Soviet Union.
- 7 October 1967* – 6th fleet arrives in Istanbul under anti-American demonstrations.
- 16 October 1967* – Unrest in Cyprus due to death of twenty-four Turkish Cypriots.
- 18 November 1967* – Turkish jets fly over Cyprus.
- 20 November 1967* – President Johnson warns Turkey against the use of NATO weapons in Cyprus.
- 5 January 1968* – Prague Spring begins. Reformist Alexander Dubček elected First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.
- 2 May 1968* – Students occupy Paris University at Nanterre following a period of conflicts, and the administration shuts down the university. Protests against the closure follow at Sorbonne University. Workers begin occupying factories.
- 10–12 June 1968* – Student boycotts which started in Ankara University, Faculty of Languages, History and Geography spread to Faculties of Law and Science at Ankara University and Faculty of Law at Istanbul University.
- 17 June 1968* – Students occupy Istanbul Technical University.
- 24 June 1968* – Education activities halted in Istanbul University until student siege is over.
- 17 July 1968* – 6th fleet in Turkish waters is protested against. Several demonstrators injured. Police attack dormitories of Istanbul Technical University, throw Vedat Demircioğlu, a student member of TİP, out of a window.

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- 24 July 1968 – Demircioğlu dies. TİP warns student members against provocations by the police and tries to cool down the atmosphere. Student leaders blame TİP for pacifism.
- 15 August 1968 – Top commanders from land, marine, and air forces resign from their posts, upon their request.
- 17 August 1968 – Memduh Tağmaç becomes the new top commander in land forces, Celal Eyicioğlu in marine forces, and Reşat Mater in air forces.
- 20 August 1968 – Invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union.
- 26 December 1968 – Istanbul University closes down for an indefinite period of time due to student protests.
- 30 December 1968 – Anticomunist “commandoes” attack a vocational school for teachers (Ankara Yüksek Öğretmen Okulu) in Ankara with heavy sticks and chains.
- 6 January 1969 – U.S. Ambassador Robert Komer’s car is turned upside down and burned at the Middle East Technical University (METU) by students, including Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, Sinan Cemgil and Taylan Özgür in Ankara.
- 9 January 1969 – METU closes down for a month.
- 11 February 1969 – 6th fleet in the Bosphorus. Student demonstrations continue.
- 16 February 1969 – Bloody Sunday. The police break up massive leftist protests in Istanbul’s Beyazıt Square.
- 9–10 June 1969 – Use of Molotov cocktails and noise bombs for the first time against the police in student demonstrations.
- June 1969: Deniz Gezmiş goes to Palestine to learn guerilla warfare with fellow protestors Cihan Alptekin and Yusuf Küpeli.
- 3 July 1969 – Turkey and the United States sign an agreement stating Turkey as the landowner of the U.S. military bases in that country.
- 12 October 1969 – Elections are held (AP 260 seats, CHP 144 seats).
- 2 November 1969 – Demirel’s second cabinet obtains vote of confidence.
- 3 March 1970 – Demirel’s third cabinet obtains vote of confidence.
- 9 August 1970 – Turkish lira is devalued.
- 15 October 1970 – A Soviet plane is hijacked and forced to land in Trabzon, on the north coast of Turkey.
- December 1970 – Leftist student leaders shift to urban guerilla activities. People’s Liberation Army of Turkey (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu, THKO) and People’s Liberation Party-Front of Turkey (THKP-C Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi) are founded.
- 1 January 1971 – Members of THKO, including leader Deniz Gezmiş, rob Emek branch of İş Bank in Ankara.
- 21 January 1971 – METU closes down for an indefinite period of time. The police take several students into custody after massive beatings in dormitories of Ankara University’s Faculty of Political Sciences.

- 12 *February 1971* – THKP-C robs the Küçükesat branch of Ziraat Bank in Ankara.
- 15 *February 1971* – THKO infiltrates the U.S. base in Balgat to obtain arms, and kidnaps a sergeant on duty to guarantee their safe exit.
- 3 *March 1971* – THKO kidnaps four U.S. soldiers from Ahlatlıbel Radar Base.
- 8 *March 1971* – THKO releases the U.S. soldiers. Yusuf Aslan captured in Sivas-Şarkışla.
- 9 *March 1971* – The Madanoğlu junta, composed of leftist officers in the army, is eliminated with help from MIT agent Mahir Kaynak, who infiltrates the civilian section of the junta.
- 12 *March 1971* – Armed forces deliver a memorandum. Prime Minister Demirel resigns.
- 16 *March 1971* – Deniz Gezmiş captured in Sivas-Gemerek and sent to prison.
- 23 *March 1971* – Armed forces catch Hüseyin İnan in Kayseri after his uncle informs the police as to his whereabouts.
- 7 *April 1971* – Nihat Erim becomes the new Prime Minister as his cabinet of technocrats obtains a vote of confidence.
- 17 *May 1971* – Efraim Elrom, Israel's Ambassador and Consul General, is kidnapped in Istanbul by THKP-C members Mahir Çayan, Ulaş Bardakçı and Hüseyin Cevahir.
- 22 *May 1971* – Çayan, Bardakçı and Cevahir ask for the release of their friends. They are rejected and kill Efraim Elrom.
- 23 *May 1971* – Curfew in Istanbul.
- 30 *May 1971* – Mahir Çayan and Hüseyin Cevahir are spotted in Maltepe. Sniper fire kills Cevahir. Çayan is arrested after his unsuccessful suicide attempt.
- 23 *July 1971* – Martial Law extended for two months in eleven cities.
- 9 *October 1971* – Revolutionaries including student leaders Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, and Hüseyin İnan are sentenced to the death penalty.
- 25 *November 1971* – Another extension to Martial Law for two months.
- 29 *November 1971* – Mahir Çayan and Ulaş Bardakçı escape from prison.
- 3 *December 1971* – Eleven ministers of the Erim government resign. Prime Minister Erim's resignation follows.
- 11 *December 1971* – Nihat Erim constitutes his second cabinet.
- 10 *January 1972* – The Military Court of Cassation approves death penalties for Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, and Hüseyin İnan.
- 23 *January 1972* – Curfew in Istanbul. A wide search brings house arrests.
- 19 *February 1972* – Ulaş Bardakçı killed in Arnavutköy.
- 10 *March 1972* – Turkish Parliament approves the execution of the death penalties for Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, and Hüseyin İnan.

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- 26 *March 1972* – THKP-C leader Mahir Çayan and his friends kidnap three engineers: Charles Turner, Gordon Banner, and John Stuart Law (two British, one Canadian) from a U.S. radar base in Ordu and demand the release of Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, and Hüseyin İnan.
 - 30 *March 1972* – Kidnappers and engineers are killed in Kızıldere, Niksar. One member of THKP-C, Ertuğrul Kürkçü, survives.
 - 17 *April 1972* – Prime Minister Nihat Erim resigns.
 - 6 *May 1972* – Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, and Hüseyin İnan are executed.
 - 8 *May 1972* – CHP leader İsmet İnönü resigns from his post.
 - 9 *January 1973* – Trials of the Madanoğlu junta begin.
 - 25 *January 1973* – Martial Law extended for another two months in nine cities.
 - 29 *January 1973* – İbrahim Kaypakkaya is caught.
 - 11 *September 1973* – Chilean military stage a coup against Salvador Allende.
 - 14 *October 1973* – Democracy is restored with elections (CHP: 185 seats, AP: 149 seats).
 - 17 *October 1973* – CHP leader Bülent Ecevit is assigned to form his cabinet.
 - 25 *November 1973* – Military coup in Greece.
 - 25 *December 1973* – İsmet İnönü passes away.
 - 20 *July 1974*: Turkish military forces invade Cyprus to protect the Turkish-Cypriot community.
 - 22 *July 1974* – Turkey accepts the UN's call for ceasefire and stops the military operation.
 - 20 *September 1974* – The United States ceases all military aid to Turkey.
 - 30 *January 1975* – The United States imposes an embargo on arms sales to Turkey.
 - 29 *July 1975* – An announcement by the Department of the Chief of Staff proclaims that U.S. bases except Incirlik (in Adana) are taken over.
 - 18 *September 1976* – Syndicates such as DİSK organize mass demonstrations.
 - 1 *March 1977* – Turkish lira is devalued.
 - 1 *May 1977* – Bloody May Day. Unidentified gunshots at Taksim Square cause thirty-four deaths and many injuries.
 - 5 *June 1977* – Elections are held (CHP: 213 seats, AP: 189 seats).
 - 13 *June 1977* – Prime Minister Demirel resigns.
 - 21 *June 1977* – Bülent Ecevit forms his cabinet.
 - 20 *September 1977* – Turkish lira devalued again.
 - 1978 – The Revolutionary Left (Devrimci Sol or Dev-Sol) with the leadership of Dursun Karataş is founded by a faction of the People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey.
 - 16 *March 1978* – Leftist students are attacked by bombs at Istanbul University killing five and injuring forty-seven people. The university is closed down for an indefinite period.

- 25 *July 1978* – The U.S. Senate lifts the embargo provided that Turkey withdraws from Cyprus.
- 9 *October 1978* – Seven university students, all members of the Labor Party (TİP) are murdered in Bahçelievler, Ankara.
- 18 *December 1978* – A cinema is bombed in Kahramanmaraş. Townspeople blame leftist activists as the perpetrators initiating street clashes on a religious divide between the Sunni and the Alevi inhabitants.
- 8 *December 1978* – Seventy-seven people die and more than 1,000 are injured in Kahramanmaraş. A curfew is instituted.
- 25 *December 1978* – The death toll in Kahramanmaraş reaches ninety-eight.
- 26 *December 1978* – Martial Law is declared in thirteen cities: Istanbul, Ankara, Adana, Elazığ, Bingöl, Erzincan, Erzurum, Gaziantep, Kars, Kahramanmaraş, Malatya, Sivas, and Urfa.
- 1 *February 1979* – Abdi İpekçi, chief writer of the daily *Milliyet*, is murdered. The murderer, Mehmet Ali Ağca, is arrested but he escapes prison while his case is still in court.
- 9 *Nisan 1979* – Retired colonel Sebahattin Savasman, vice Director of the National Intelligence Agency MİT, is sentenced to prison for seventeen years and six months for spying.
- 25 *November 1979* – Mehmet Ali Ağca escapes from military prison.
- 24 *January 1980* – The so-called 24th January Decisions are instituted. All conditions set by IMF are accepted. Turkish lira is devalued.
- 19 *July 1980* – Dev-Sol assassinates Nihat Erim in Dragos.
- 22 *July 1980* – Kemal Türkler, former leader of the DİSK and leader of Maden-İş, is murdered.
- 12 *September 1980* – Military intervention with tanks lined up in the streets of Ankara under the leadership of Kenan Evren, Chief of Staff occurs. The Parliament is closed down. All syndicates and associations are closed down. A curfew is issued.
- 13 *September 1980* – Kenan Evren becomes President.
- 18 *September 1980* – President Kenan Evren and members of the National Security Council (MGK) make their vows in the parliament.
- 30 *October 1980* – CHP leader Ecevit resigns from his post.
- 10 *November 1980* – Writer and publisher İlhan Erdost dies as a result of massive beating by soldiers who took him and his brother into custody.
- 11 *November 1980* – *Cumhuriyet* newspaper is closed down.
- 9 *November 1982* – Generals impose a new constitution limiting human rights.
- 6 *November 1983* – Democracy is restored with elections. National Security Council allows three political parties to compete (Anavatan Partisi: 211 seats, Halkçı Parti: 117 seats, Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi: 71 seats).

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Index

Page numbers in *italics* refer to the Chronology.

A

- Ağaoğlu, Adalet, 5, 14, 17, 27, 163,
164, 165–86, 215
Altan, Çetin, 5, 18, 23, 24, 38–53, 55,
208
anti-Americanism, 3, 7, 30
anarchy, 25, 27, 28, 94, 109, 145, 146,
160, 165, 187, 191, 192, 201
Anday, Melih Cevdet, 5, 23, 25, 36,
73–88, 208
anticommunism, 4, 10, 11, 25, 26, 30,
53, 93, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118, 124,
125, 144, 146, 154, 201, 202, 219,
220. *See also* communism
Atılğan, Yusuf, 20, 203n2
authoritarianism, 1n1, 3, 34, 45, 49,
51, 53, 61n52, 68, 75, 85, 108, 110,
143, 161, 183

B

- Belge, Murat, 14, 15–16, 58n45,
122n51
Bordo, Susan, 73
boycott, 11, 150, 155, 168, 180, 219
Buğra, Tarık, 5, 27, 163–65, 186–202,
213
Butler, Judith, 10n26, 29–30, 42, 46,
66, 70, 76, 165

C

- capitalism, 1n1, 3, 8, 9, 26, 27, 30–31,
92, 95, 97, 111, 118, 133, 140, 143,
167, 170, 172, 180, 186, 211

- castration, 45, 48, 63, 65
Ceyhun, Demirtaş, 5, 26
circumcision, 45, 48
Çokum, Sevinç, 5, 26, 93–94, 144–62,
210–11
communism, 10, 30, 116, 123, 152,
189, 201, 202. *See also* anticom-
munism
Connell, R. W., 10n27, 31, 37, 57, 97,
167, 176
coup d'état, *see* military coup

D

- Deleuze, Gilles, 22n60, 95
Demirel, Süleyman, 114, 115
domination, 36, 37, 44, 45, 52, 53, 57,
58, 73, 80, 91, 92, 95, 99, 100, 126,
127, 140, 144, 185, 210, 211

E

- Elrom, Ephraim, 146, 221
emasculatation, 31, 48, 50, 53–73, 74,
81, 114, 144, 163, 177, 194, 198,
199, 204, 213, 214
Erim, Nihat, 216, 221, 222, 223
Erol, Sibel, 92
Ertop, Konur, 18

F

- fascism, 34, 83, 95, 116, 118, 119, 120,
143, 148, 188
femininity, 31, 33, 67, 81, 87, 90, 99,
106, 119, 138, 158, 160, 167, 177

feminism, 9, 10, 11, 29, 30, 32, 33, 75,
76, 89, 93, 94, 97, 112, 165
Foucault, Michel, , 29, 39, 57, 66, 79,
95, 150
freedom, 1, 3, 21, 28, 36, 47, 74, 82,
93, 94, 144, 150, 155, 156, 157, 158,
160, 161, 191, 200, 210, 214

G

Gezmiş, Deniz, 24, 54, 159, 169n7,
220, 221, 222
Gilmore, David, 58
Greenblatt, Stephen, 29
“greywolves,” 25, 28, 96, 104, 113–26,
160, 207
Guattari, Felix, 22n60, 95

H

Halberstam, Judith 89, 98
Hearn, Jeff 89
Holocaust, 6, 7
hypermasculinity, 30, 163, 170, 172,
194

I

İnan, Hüseyin 24, 221, 222
İşinsu, Emine, *see* Okçu, Emine
İşinsu
Islam 2, 3, 62, 113, 115, 152

J

junta 2n2, 54, 55, 122n51, 174n13,
221, 222

K

Kafka, Franz 40, 58n45, 66
Kakıncı, Tarık Dursun 5, 24
Karasu, Bilge 5, 20
Kemal, Orhan 165, 203n2
Kemal, Yaşar 14n40, 203n2
Kemalism 15n42, 60, 61n52, 117, 123,
136n69, 165

Kızılbaş 62
Kimmel, Michael 8–9, 31, 35–36, 133,
144
Kocagöz, Samim 5, 26
Komer, Robert 169n7, 220
Korean War, 174, 176, 215
Kür, Pınar 5, 18, 26, 27, 93, 126–43,
210, 215

L

Labor Party of Turkey, 13n37, 176,
219, 223

M

Mao Zedong 4n12, 150, 156
“male gaze,” 130, 132
martyrdom, 26, 87, 93, 94, 116
Menderes, Adnan 1, 219
Middle East Technical University
(METU) 169n7, 220
military coups, 1–6, 13, 15, 18–21, 25,
28, 36, 53, 65, 73, 88, 90, 100, 108,
115, 125, 126n55, 163, 204 209,
219–24

N

Naci, Fethi 12n35, 14, 17, 185,
201–202
Nandy, Ashis 30, 43–44, 51, 163
nationalism 113–15, 118, 123, 124,
126, 210
Nationalist Movement Party
(Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi)
25n63, 115

O

Okçu, Emine İşinsu 55, 26, 92–93,
113–26, 136n69, 144, 152, 160, 165,
210, 211, 215
Oktay, Ahmet 14, 18
Öz, Erdal 5, 24, 53–73, 118, 128, 208
Özlü, Demir 5, 20, 26–27

P

pan-Turkism, 94
 performativity, 29, 36, 84, 87
 political prisoners, 7, 15, 23, 24, 26,
 33, 36, 38–39, 52, 54, 55–56, 57,
 66–68, 90, 108, 112, 208
 propaganda, 7, 14, 19, 24, 96, 191, 201

R

radicalism, 25, 150
 rape, 44, 65, 108, 112, 120–23, 133–35

S

Scarry, Elaine, 36, 37
 Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, 32–33,
 70n80, 100, 121n48
 Selçuk, Füzûzan, 25
 socialism, 2, 15, 20, 139, 141, 143, 214
 sodomization, 55, 64
 Soysal, Sevgi, 5, 18, 26, 92, 97–113,
 133, 139, 143, 210, 215
 subalterns, 55, 59, 71, 111, 175
 surveillance, 23, 38, 39–40, 51, 52, 61,
 66, 73, 79, 83

T

testimony, 6, 8, 9, 14, 16, 23, 36, 39,
 105, 179, 237

Theweleit, Klaus, 33–34, 119, 188,
 190, 199
 torture, 1, 4, 6, 7, 15, 17, 24, 25, 29, 33,
 36–38, 44, 48, 52, 53–57, 60–65,
 69–72, 109, 112, 124, 184, 195, 208,
 214
 Turkism, see pan-Turkism

U

United States, 2n3, 8, 124, 175, 216,
 220, 222
 urban guerillas, 11–12, 186, 188, 201,
 220

V

victimization 8, 10, 13, 18, 29, 35–36,
 47, 55, 65, 71–72, 73, 74, 85, 86, 87,
 90–91, 92, 96, 100, 104, 108, 114,
 127, 184, 186, 208, 210, 214

W

westernization, 179, 196, 199, 213
 witness, 6, 7, 15, 23, 25, 26, 79, 93, 108,
 110, 112, 157, 166, 167–68, 172,
 176, 180, 200–201, 204, 216

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